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# GREECE:

## AMERICAN AID IN ACTION · 1947–1956

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# GREECE:

## AMERICAN AID IN ACTION

## 1947–1956

BY WILLIAM HARDY McNEILL

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THE TWENTIETH CENTURY FUND
NEW YORK · 1957

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# FOREWORD

In 1946 the Trustees of the Twentieth Century Fund focused their attention upon Greece as a crucial area in the developing world tension. That was before the declaration of the "Truman Doctrine" brought American support to replace the traditional British influence; well before Greece became an ally within NATO. A Twentieth Century Fund team visited the country, and *Report on the Greeks* by Frank Smothers, William Hardy McNeill and Elizabeth Darbishire McNeill was published by the Fund in 1948.

Eight years later, in the summer of 1956, Mr. McNeill was in a position to revisit Greece. It seemed useful to encourage him to bring up to date the earlier account. The present volume is in the nature of one man's attempt to see objectively but sympathetically the impact of American aid and of western policy upon a people at once variable and tenacious, blending old and new in a pattern uniquely its own.

In the nature of things, the end of the story cannot yet be told. Yet this interim record may help cast needed light. The foreign economic policies of the United States are being tested on a worldwide stage. The villages and towns of Greece provide one corner where experience has been gained — a corner that is by no means the least instructive, nor the least hopeful in its implications.

AUGUST HECKSCHER, *Director*
*The Twentieth Century Fund*

330 West 42 Street, New York
August 1957

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Without the willingness of literally hundreds of people in Greece to answer questions and search their records on my behalf, this little book could not have been written. The warmth and extravagant hospitality with which Greeks of every rank and station receive a stranger is, indeed, a source of never ending surprise to one accustomed to the atmosphere of an American city, and I wish hereby to thank all those, both friends and casual acquaintances, who thus contributed to my knowledge and understanding of the Greek scene. 123 [574 609]

More particularly, I owe a debt of gratitude to a number of busy officials of the Greek government who took time to talk with me, and more than once set wheels in motion to provide statistics and other special information I requested of them. In Salonika, Mr. Orphanides of the Agricultural Bank, and in Athens Mr. Leviratos of the Ministry of Coordination and Mr. Liakis of the National Statistical Services were especially helpful. 115

Among the members of the American community in Greece, I am particularly indebted to Mr. Bruce Lansdale, Director of the American Farm School in Salonika, and to Mr. Doggett of the aid mission. Mr. John Enepikides, of the American Embassy, also went far out of his way to help me find information I needed.

I must also gratefully acknowledge the assistance and friendship of Mr. John Skiriotis and Mr. John Boudouroglu, who made it possible for me to participate in the rapid fire of normal Greek conversation by translating my questions and interpreting the answers when I could not keep up with the pace. 124

122 Finally, the officers and staff of the Twentieth Century Fund contributed wisdom and careful scrutiny as well as money to the enterprise, and have caught at least some of my errors and inconsistencies before it was too late. For this, no less than for the grant that made my trip financially possible, I am the Fund's debtor.

000 Yet while all those whom I have named, as well as many personal friends in Greece whom I feel it best to leave anonymous, certainly helped to bring this book to birth, none of them is in the least responsible for the judgments and opinions I have expressed. Nor is the Twentieth Century Fund, in publishing this book, in any way committed to defend the accuracy of my analysis of Greek affairs. The final decision on matters of substance and emphasis was by necessity my own.

WILLIAM H. MCNEILL

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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## CHAPTER 1

# THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE

Like other countries struggling under the impact of western 177
technology and ideas, contemporary Greece is a land of sharp 184
contrasts. Donkeys with loaded panniers on their backs still jog 369
down the broad avenues of modern Athens oblivious to the [443]
stream of automobiles passing them by; and the donkeys' own- [492]
ers daily hawk their wares, with piercing and immemorial cries,
to people living in ultra-modern apartment buildings, as well
as to others who inhabit the merest hovels, clustered along nar-

177 row alleys behind the handsome main streets of the city. Simi-
184 larly, in the countryside it is still possible to see groups of peas-
369 ants toiling stoopbacked and patient as they harvest their grain
with sickles, handful by handful, while, perhaps in the next
[243] field, an American combine may be observed noisily at work.

The combines and the glistening apartment buildings of Athens are very new; the donkeys and the sickles are older than recorded history. In a very real sense, the central problem of contemporary Greek life is how to close this gap, and bring the old and the new into a smooth and mutually beneficial interrelationship. Much progress has been made in this direction during the past ten years, but stubborn difficulties remain. It will require at least another generation before these difficulties can be overcome, even if peace and prosperity prevail throughout the coming years.

433 Peace and prosperity have seldom visited the Greeks for long,
161 least of all during the twentieth century. Greece was almost
648 continuously at war from 1912 to 1923 and again from 1940 to
1949; and the intervals of peace between these times of crisis were seldom secure. The wealth of the country suffered very severely from both periods of war, but in spite of economic dislocation and widespread destruction of property, the population increased fairly rapidly, from just over 5 million in 1920 (when Greece first attained approximately her present boundaries) to just about 8 million in 1956. Part of this growth was due to natural increase, but about one and a quarter million new inhabitants came to the country between 1922 and 1927, as a result of forcible exchanges of population with Turkey and Bulgaria after the first world war.

563 The effect of these exchanges was to make almost all of the population Greek in speech and sentiment, although two significant minority groups remained: a Slavic "Macedonian" population in the northwest where the borders of Greece, Yugo-

slavia and Albania come together, and a Turkish Moslem 563
minority in Thrace. Official figures on the size of these minori-
ties have not been published, but in all probability neither much
exceeds 60,000 persons.

Greece is a small country, with a total area of slightly more 433
than 50,000 square miles, or just about the size of the state of 13
Illinois. It is also a poor country, lacking in any very important
natural resources, short of fuel, but blessed with a magnificent
climate similar to that of southern California. The country is
very mountainous. Patches of fertile land, none of them very
large, are separated from each other by tangles of barren hill
and mountain. The main crops are wheat, grapes, olives, cotton 433
and tobacco; and of these tobacco is by all odds the most im-
portant for foreign trade, since all the wheat and nearly all the [439]
cotton, wine and olive oil are consumed within the country, [241]
leaving only a surplus of tobacco, currants and a few other spe-
cialized agricultural products for export.

Industry is comparatively weak. Greek industrial exports
have seldom been able to compete in price or quality on world
markets. The Greek merchant marine, on the other hand, is one [505]
of the important fleets of the world; but many Greek-owned
ships are not registered in Greece, and many of the most suc-
cessful Greek shipowners do not live in the country of their
birth. The reason is that Greek taxes on ships and shipowners [651]
are heavier than those levied by some other countries, and the
shipowners therefore find it expedient to register their ships
and take their profits elsewhere. They do, however, often re- [464]
cruit their crews in the home country, and thus offer a source of [505]
employment to several thousand Greeks.

Greece fought on the Allied side in both the first and second 648
world wars, suffered German and Italian occupation between
1941 and 1944, and became a special British "sphere of influ-
ence" in political and military matters during 1944–46. Since

648 1946, United States influence has replaced British, and in 1951 Greece was admitted to the NATO alliance along with her neighbor, Turkey. Greece thus belongs to the free world, yet her geographical position, along one margin of the Communist heartland of eastern Europe, creates a constant threat to the nation's security.

648 433 Ever since the second world war the Greeks have therefore had to wrestle simultaneously with the problems of poverty and of political insecurity. Both were old problems in Greek history, but the scale was new – so much so that Greek resources were by themselves quite inadequate to meet the difficulties that loomed large after 1945. Only the delivery of substantial amounts of foreign, and especially of American, aid prevented political collapse and Communist revolution in the years just after the war.

114 This book will try to describe the successes and failures in this struggle, and make an estimate of the prospects for ultimate success in relieving poverty and improving social stability in Greece. Before launching on an account of what has been achieved, however, something should be said about the character of Greek society, with special attention to the points of difference that divide us in the United States from the Greeks.

### *Life in the Villages*

241 433 [369] [162] [434] [464] [463] The fundamental fact about Greece today is that in spite of the rather rapid growth of towns and cities in recent decades, the country still remains predominantly agrarian. In 1950, according to a special agricultural census, rural families comprised 4,770,783 persons, or 63 per cent of the estimated total population of the country in that year. Some of these families supplemented their agricultural income by seasonal employment in towns or on roads or other public works, and should, perhaps, not be counted as full-time farmers.

[Village Life]

perhaps, not be counted as full-time farmers. Indeed, when one 241
realizes that according to this same census the average family 433
farm contained only a little more than 8 acres, and the amount 463
of productive land per head of the rural population totaled just [423]
1.75 acres, it is obvious that there are very few full-time farmers in Greece, if the term is taken to mean persons who busy themselves on the land throughout the year.

Except for a few weeks, when especially intensive work of 461
cultivation or harvesting must be done, Greek peasant farmers 517
enjoy a great deal of leisure, and spend it, characteristically, sit- 275
ting in the village *cafeneion*, or coffee house, talking, playing backgammon, or just watching the passing scene. A casual observer might mistake such idleness for laziness; yet when tangible gain is to be won by working hard, Greek peasants do not spare themselves. But in practically every village there are far more hands than are needed to do the work of the fields; and when the needful work has been done, sitting in a coffee house
is more entertaining than sitting at home. There a man may [521]
hear the latest gossip of the village, read the Athens newspapers, talk politics, and watch the shadows shift across the village square as the day progresses.

The women, on the other hand, lead a much harder life. 517
Household tasks and the care of children take up most of the 562
hours of the day, and in the seasons when field work is heavy, [462]
women work side by side with the men. For a woman to sit in
a coffee house would be the grossest breach of etiquette, some- [275]
thing quite unthinkable. The village water fountain may serve [576]
as a place for daily gossip; but it is the church which really pro- [521]
vides the village women with a meeting place where they may
on a Sunday morning, after (or even during) the service, talk [794]
and enjoy a few minutes of leisure each week. By a curious and unspoken law, the men of the villages usually do not attend church, save on feast days and other special occasions. Thus

[Village Life]

517

562 they avoid infringing on the women's meeting place, though not as rigorously as the women avoid the men's coffee house.

184 361 433 438 Nearly all villages conform to these customs, and much else unites them in a common pattern of life. Yet there is a very important distinction to be made between hill villages and villages of the plains. The distinction is not simply one of altitude. Hill villages, by and large, are located in areas so barren that the population cannot raise enough food for its own consumption, whereas plains villages, as would be expected, normally produce a food surplus for sale.

361 241 433 The traveler in Greece, especially if he leaves the main roads behind and explores some of the rough byways of the land, will frequently be surprised to find quite large villages perched in the most improbable places, hiding in some mountain cleft far from any substantial area of cultivable land. Equally surprising is the fact that in some of the broadest and most fertile plains, like that of Thessaly for instance, villages are rather widely separated. Places can be found where cultivated fields extend in all directions yet no house or village can be seen. In such localities, the fields are often tilled by peasants who live miles away in a village nestling in foothills near the margin of the plain.

361 433 The reason for this anomalous distribution of population is largely historical. In Turkish times, if not before, life in the plains was difficult and dangerous. Soldiers and officials, as they passed to and fro, lived off the local inhabitants. Tax and rent collectors, too, were more attentive to the plains dwellers, whose fields might be expected to produce more wealth for the collector to seize upon. These plagues were less serious in the back country, away from the main lines of communication. As a result, humble villagers found it safer to live in the hills, leaving
[464] the plains comparatively empty. But there was little food to be found in the uplands, and the Turkish landowners of the plains
[166] often needed extra hands to help cultivate their broad acres.

[Village Life]

Hence a sort of symbiosis was established. A large proportion 361
of the able-bodied men of the hill villages descended each year 464
to the plains and worked in the fields of the Turkish landown- 166
ers, then returned to their homes with wages, either in money 433
or in kind, with which to supplement the produce of the tiny fields they had been able to carve from the mountain valleys and slopes around their homes.

Some of the hill villages developed occupational specialties,[1] 361
sending most of their able-bodied men each year to labor as 438
masons or carpenters wherever work was to be found. Groups 464
of villagers sometimes walked as much as a hundred miles to 166
and from the scene of this sort of seasonal employment. Other 433
villages developed what might be called industrial specialties – lime burning, rug weaving, wood carving and the like – and peddled their products far and wide during the summer season. One village even developed an international trade in specially dyed red wool and cloth during the latter years of the eighteenth century, stationing agents in such cities as Vienna, Constantinople and Leipzig. The origins of the modern Greek mer- [505]
chant marine were similar, for sailors were easily recruited among peasant boys of the islands and coasts, who sought seasonal employment to supplement what could be produced on the family farm.

Another pattern of migration should be mentioned, up into the higher mountain slopes rather than down to the plains. Each summer herds of sheep and goats were sent to pasture on the high ground, where vegetation stayed green through the summer drought, and then returned to lower altitudes when the snows fell. Quite a few hill villages specialized in sheepherding, accompanying their own sheep, and sometimes sheep entrusted to them by others as well, on this annual round.

As long as the hill villages lay between two relatively unpop- 361
ulated geographic regions – the plains beneath and the peaks 166
464
433

[1] [During Turkish times - ANALYST]

[Village Life]

361 above — these complicated arrangements worked well enough.
166 The Greek communities in the hills escaped the full rigor of
464 Turkish oppression, maintained a very considerable degree of
433 self-government, and were yet able to make a living by supplementing what they could produce in the immediate locality with what they could earn far afield.

361 Two other factors help to explain the concentration of popu-
[312] lation in the hills. One was water. Greece is a dry country in summer, and before modern well-drilling techniques were known, in many localities it was difficult or impossible to live
[164] the year around in the plains. A second factor was malaria. Until DDT came to Greece after the second world war, a very large part of the country was afflicted with chronic malaria. Hill valleys, where drainage was good, were often free of this disease when the plains were not.

361 Yet problems of water supply and the risk of malaria were
166 not enough to keep eager Greek settlers from the fat lands of
175 the plains when Turkish political control was withdrawn. On
433 the contrary, as one region after another was liberated, between 1821 and 1913, Turkish landlords and peasants left or were driven out. Land so vacated was promptly settled by Greeks, many of whom came down from hill villages, while others came from Asia Minor in 1922 and 1923, fleeing the wrath of Turkish
[563] armies. Only in western Thrace was the Turkish peasantry allowed to remain on the land in return for a guarantee from Turkey not to disturb the Greek inhabitants of Constantinople and eastern Thrace.

361 But what would happen when the Turks had been driven
464 from the scene, and the plains had been pre-empted by Greek
166 peasant communities? Clearly, this development, however sat-
178 isfying to national sentiments, spelled growing hardship for
433 those who remained behind in the ancient hill villages. A landlord with hundreds or thousands of acres might be eager to hire

[Village Life]

large numbers of men to help till his ground for him; a peasant 361
farmer, owning thirty or forty acres, needed comparatively little 166
outside help with his crops. Moreover, as the population of the 464
plains villages grew, farms were subdivided, and there was less 178
and less need of outside labor. Thus the old symbiosis between 433
hill and plain was upset as the plains came to be more densely
occupied by a peasant farming population. The hillsmen, whose
numbers continued to increase, had to seek new outlets.

The major outlet they discovered was emigration overseas, 167
especially to the United States. This was, in a sense, merely a 464
geographic extension of the familiar pattern of going away from 178
home to seek work. Largely for this reason, many of the Greek 433
emigrants who came to this country – mainly between 1900 and
1924 – arrived with no intention of remaining permanently in
their new environment. They hoped instead to make enough
money to allow them to go back home to their village, and there
buy a house and some land in order to live in the traditional
style of their forefathers. Many of course stayed, finding the
new life overseas more satisfactory than the old one at home;
but many thousands acted upon their original plans and returned.
As a result, even today when an American arrives in one [191]
of the remoter and more isolated villages of Greece, it is no uncommon
thing to be met by some returned migrant who spent
the best years of his youth in Chicago or New York, and can
produce a few words of broken English to prove it. Richer villages
in the plains, on the contrary, seldom sent men overseas.
As long as the family enjoyed enough land to be able to live in
the simple style to which the Greek peasants were accustomed,
there was no compelling motive that would lead a man to undertake
such a perilous and expensive venture.

In 1924 the United States established a quota on immigration [648]
which virtually stopped the stream of Greek migration to this
country. At about the same time, most of the other countries of

[Village Life]

433

464 the world that could offer an attractive chance to an impecuni-
167 ous peasant boy also put legal barriers in the way, so that this
178 escape from the deteriorating position of the hill villages of
648 Greece was rather abruptly cut off.

[166] Within Greece, the growth of towns and a modest development of industry, which scarcely antedated the 1920's, offered an escape for a few of the surplus hands that had appeared in the hill villages. But this was by no means adequate to take care of the problem. Not only was the growth of industry and urban occupations comparatively slow, while the rate at which the peasant population grew was high, but even more important, in 1922 and 1923 Greece was compelled to accommodate more than a million refugees from Asia Minor – people who had been uprooted from their homes by the Turks as a consequence of the war between Greece and Turkey which lasted from 1920 to 1922. Many of these refugees had followed urban occupations in Asia Minor, and clustered naturally in the larger cities of Greece, where their skills and entrepreneurial energy frequently opened paths to them which were closed to the ordinary Greek peasant seeking employment away from home.

433 It was therefore not surprising that Greek peasants, especially
464 those cooped up in hill villages, exhibited a growing distress
178 and bafflement during the 1920's and 1930's, since their tradi-
tional patterns of life no longer sufficed to bring wonted results.
[458] The world depression of the 1930's hit Greece hard, and con-
[642] tributed to the collapse of parliamentary government in 1936,
[653] when General John Metaxas established a dictatorship. Metaxas
attempted to relieve the economic problems of the country by
[701] launching an ambitious program of public works, especially
[625] road building; and the expansion of the army and gendarmerie
which he carried through also afforded careers to a number of
young men from poor hill villages. But this was palliative rather
000 than cure. When the second world war came, followed by Ital-

[Village Life]

When the second world war came, followed by Ital-
ian and German occupation and drastic derangement of the na- 433
tional economy, the situation of the hill villages became truly 731
desperate. Starvation visited many of them.

Famine in time of war was age-old; and the response of the [579]
hillsmen of Greece also had very ancient precedent behind it,
for they took gun in hand, and attempted to seize forcibly what
they could no longer gain peaceably from the plains. They 726
formed the backbone of the wartime ~~resistance forces~~, and justi- 669
fied their violence by patriotism, quite in the spirit their fore-
fathers had shown in attacking the Turks. Yet the resistance 433
movement was not merely a reassertion of old patterns. Its lead- [668]
ership was mainly provided by Communists, who in earlier
years had been a small and not very significant group, largely
confined to the towns.[1]

In the wartime resistance movement the inhabitants of the hill villages found a sort of economic relief, inasmuch as the guerrilla bands lived by raiding the plains, taking by force a part of the agricultural surplus of those regions in order to feed themselves. A young man, without any real occupation in his native village, and without any hope of a career at home which could satisfy even the traditionally low level of expectation among the hillsmen, could, by joining a guerrilla band, hope to feed himself and relieve his family of the burden of his presence. In addition, he could become a hero, fighting for freedom and liberty, social justice and a better life for all.

For most peasant boys, the ulterior aims of their Communist 669
leaders meant little or nothing. Indeed, the Communists were at very considerable pains to play down any plans they had for social revolution, and welcomed persons of widely differing social views into the ranks of the resistance. This was, of course,

---

[1] There were a number of non-Communist resistance bands also, but most of them did not last long, and the successful ones were confined to Epirus, in the northwest.

[Village Life]

669 thoroughly in harmony with the "popular front" tactics inculcated by international Communist policy. When British [648] intervention in 1944 prevented the resistance forces from seizing power in Greece, the rank and file of those who had supported the Communists during the war had little reason to distrust their leaders, since the Communists had not had time or opportunity to carry through the revolution they hoped for.

669 433 As a result, when in 1946 international Communist policy again mobilized the energies of the Greek Communist party to begin a new guerrilla war, Communist organizers found little difficulty in winning the sympathy and support of the same social groups that had participated in the wartime resistance movement. The hill villages were prepared to send their young men into the guerrilla ranks for the same reasons as before. Liberation had not brought prosperity, and without prosperity in the cities and plains, life in the hills was very hard. Hence the Communists found it easy to create guerrilla bands in all the mountainous regions of the country.

In the most obvious sense, both of these recent guerrilla movements failed. Their leaders were killed or driven from the country, and the government remained in other hands. Yet in [208] another sense, it must be recognized that the imprint of the two guerrilla enterprises upon the attitudes of the hill villages of Greece has been deep, and seems likely to last a long time.

Basically, what the Communists achieved was to convince nearly everyone in the villages that the traditional way of living was no longer even to be wished for and striven after. Instead, they held out fascinating and quite unrealizable dreams of bathtubs and electric refrigerators for all. Or rather, they held this out as an ultimate goal, and offered in the more immediate future a life of activity, violence and dedication — a life that at least seemed to have significance and purpose and hope. These were just what the average young man or woman

[Village Life]

in the hill villages (and in only slightly less degree the other 669
young people of Greece also) lacked, yet desperately needed in 433
order to confront the daily hardships and disappointments of private life. Here, I think, lay and continues to lie the secret of Communist influence in Greece. It was not so much the ultimate vision of wealth and ease and justice — Greek peasants are quite sophisticated enough to distrust such glittering baubles — but the mobilization of energies in the here and now to form a purposeful movement, surcharged with hope and optimism, that attracted the allegiance of so many restless young people.

At the least it seems correct to say that the guerrilla movements, with their attendant propaganda and real life experi- [208]
ences, created a population more or less chronically open to fresh revolutionary winds, from whatever direction they may blow. Even when jobs on roads and other sorts of construction opened up again in the 1950's, so that something resembling the old symbiosis of hill and plains could be resumed, the changed attitudes among the hillsmen remained quite obvious. Greece will have, for some considerable time to come, a substantial group of its population that is peculiarly receptive to [668]
movements of political dissent or outright revolution.

The real, physical problems presented by too many mouths and too little land have not been solved, and cannot be solved quickly by anything short of wholesale depopulation. But the tradition-bound attitudes which once made this precarious life seem inevitable, even if not right, have been profoundly eroded. Clearly, this is a dangerous and potentially explosive situation. What happens in the hill villages is likely to constitute the critical factor in the future political history of Greece.

The situation in the plains was different. Guerrilla bands seemed suspiciously like robbers, or at best like tax collectors, to the peasants of the plains villages from whom they demanded food. Comparatively few young men left such villages to join

[Village Life]

669 433 the guerrillas, even in the south, where landless families existed in many plains communities. The hard times that drove the hillsmen from home, gun in hand, impelled the plainsmen to stay home where there was food. More recently, the revival and improvement of agriculture naturally proceeded furthest and fastest in regions where the soil was reasonably fertile and abundant. Hence, the plains villagers have been able to achieve far better results than the hillsmen from technical and marketing changes. They have property and social status to defend, and know quite enough about Communist agrarian policy in neighboring countries to distrust beguiling words from Communist lips.

The farmers of the plains are therefore not revolutionary, even though they may grumble about present hardship, and envy others better off than themselves. They have seen quite enough of the violence and suffering which revolutions, or attempted revolutions, involve. The hillsmen, too, have suffered, and do not love violence for its own sake. But, unless I am much mistaken, they remain potential revolutionaries.

### *Town Life*

369 184 Just as the combine and the sickle join in uneasy partnership to harvest the wheat fields of Greece, so also in the towns an age-old style of life is set side by side with a few completely up-to-date factories and the most modern urban amenities. The juxtaposition in an urban context is no less awkward than in the country.

443 369 Particularly in the north, where Turkish times are still within living memory, in towns like Jannina or Kozani, one can see streets where artisans pursue their trades in little shops just as their predecessors have done for centuries. The old medieval principle still holds, whereby shops dealing in the same goods

[Town Life]

cluster together, so that one may find whole rows of silversmiths' shops in Jannina, or streets of cobblers in Kozani. The market square, where peasants from the surrounding villages bring their products for sale once or twice a week, constitutes a vital part of every town; street peddlers with their donkeys or pushcarts are everywhere. So are policemen, shoeshine boys and waiters, who will bring little cups of Turkish coffee into any office or house when summoned from the ubiquitous *cafeneions*. Great trucks and buses, often sadly dilapidated, are a prominent part of the urban scene, and, except in Athens, they outnumber passenger cars. 443 369 [493]

The daily rhythm of life in a Greek town is quite different from that familiar in the United States. People rise early, almost with the sun, and the streets in the early morning present a lively scene, as the women buy food and other household supplies and men start their daily work. As the sun mounts the sky, the streets become more deserted, until in early afternoon only a few idlers can be seen hugging the shade in the coffee shops or along the curbs. Shops close and everyone goes home to eat and sleep. By late afternoon animation returns, though it is less intense than in the morning, since many offices (including government offices) function only until early afternoon. Then with the cool of the day, about 7:30 or 8 o'clock, the streets come fully to life. Everyone who can walk comes out for a breath of air. Dense crowds move slowly through the center of town, talking and window shopping. In the main square, the young people form small groups and walk round and round, the boys in one direction and the girls in the other, thus assuring each a maximum opportunity to observe, ogle or snub the opposite sex. This is how courtship begins, and the process lends a certain vivacity to the evening. Then, by 9:30 or so, everyone goes home, lights go out and the town goes to sleep until the morrow's sunrise. 512 369 [461] [513] [584]

[Town Life]

621 Even in Athens-Piraeus this pattern is observed in many of
369 the neighborhoods into which the two cities divide. The majority of Athenians live in suburbs which date back only to 1923
and the years immediately after, when tens of thousands of
refugees from Asia Minor crowded into the town. Many of
these communities have a strong corporate sense of their own,
and live in much the same way as the smaller provincial towns
[513] already described. In the central part of Athens, however, life
pursues a rhythm more or less like that of any big European
city except that here, too, the midday siesta is rigorously observed. Also, new suburbs, inhabited by professional people and
employees, have in recent years grown up farther from the center of town; here little of the community spirit of the older
suburbs is to be found, and life rather resembles the dormitory
belt of a big American city.

369 The superabundant leisure so characteristic of village life is
517 also apparent in the towns. *Cafeneions* are numerous and nearly
275 always the sidewalk tables are well filled with men who obviously have no pressing business, if indeed they have any business at all. Street corners, curbs and squares are also occupied
[435] by the poor, who cannot afford to pay for a seat by ordering a
coffee, even though a modest 2½ drachmae (7 cents) will confer title to a table for an entire morning.

369 Every considerable town has a fringe of unemployed and
464 semi-employed inhabitants, many of them migrants from vil-
166 lages who have come seeking some sort of job to supplement
[434] the inadequate income from their family farms. Such persons
can always go back to the village if need be, where at least they
can have a roof over their heads and something to eat. Even
when a man has been successful in finding regular employment
in a town, and makes his home there, he often continues to
maintain a connection with the village from which he, or his
[602] father or grandfather, came. Family ties are very strong in

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Greece, far more so than in the United States, so that a cousin 369
or uncle who has set himself up in town will expect to help his 464
relatives to find a footing in town when they attempt to make 166
the escape from the land, and will also expect to be received 602
back into the family if dire necessity should ever compel him to abandon his town career. Family ties of this sort provide a bond between town and country, extending to the second or even the third generation.

The psychological relationship between town and country is, 369
however, subtle and complex. A peasant regards a man who has 829
no land as something less than a full man; at the same time, 186
most peasants envy what they feel to be the easier, richer and 423
more stimulating life led by townsfolk, and especially by Athenians. Town dwellers, characteristically, regard themselves as far more intelligent, better informed and more civilized than the peasants. Yet elements of peasant outlook still survive among them, particularly the burning desire to own a house and a bit of land on which to plant a grape arbor and raise flowers or a few vegetables.

In town a man's most important relations are with outsiders, 369
while in the village, relations within the family and a circle of 437
relatives dominate daily life. In town, people must buy and sell 609
every day, and the market relationship is shot through with an- 571
tagonism, since it appears that in any immediate situation one [602]
party's gain is the other's loss. Prolonged bargaining – typical of any purchase, even of vegetables in the street – expresses this attitude; and the chicanery and high markups generally characteristic of Greek business are a consequence of the same spirit which sees in any outsider a legitimate victim, to be
fleeced if possible. In village life, where market relations are [602]
merely occasional, mutual help and cooperation within the family circle provide the matrix of daily living. To be sure, outside the family circle, Greek peasants can be just as ruthless as

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437 Greek townspeople; the difference is that townsmen must deal
609 constantly with outsiders, whereas the peasants do so only occa-
[571] sionally.

[574] This contrast lends a profoundly different timbre to town as against village life. In the countryside, a foreigner is treated as an honored family guest, and is often hard put to it to avoid abusing the hospitality of people who can ill afford to be generous. In towns, also, a foreigner is courteously received, but he will be cheated in small ways all the time. Prices tend to double when he appears on the scene, and if his tips, for services real or imaginary, are not far above the ordinary Greek level, he will be made to feel stingy.

369 Another marked characteristic of Greek town life is the sharp-
463 ness of the line drawn between the manual and non-manual oc-
555 cupations. A secondary school education is the open sesame to
871 a white-collar job, and a man who has achieved that level of
461 education will not dirty his hands if he can help it. Otherwise
he would seem to surrender the status so hard-won by his years in school. One consequence of this attitude is that skilled workmen and technicians are sometimes hard to find. Anyone in a position to afford an education will try for an academic course, preparing him for the white-collar class; a technical education which could only perpetuate a close connection with machinery and manual labor simply does not appeal to an ambitious boy. Even engineers are very prone to prefer a desk job to work in the field; and in the field they not infrequently dress in city clothes and supervise from a distance, where mud and other
[178] unpleasantnesses can be avoided. There are signs that these attitudes are weakening in the younger generation, but they are still very strong.

471 The disdain for manual labor is perhaps part of a more gen-
554 eral social scheme of values which puts the rentier at or near
461 the top of the social pyramid. To own land or buildings that will
[427]

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To own land or buildings that will
produce an income without personal effort is for most Greeks 471
the pinnacle of ambition; and those who fall short of this ideal 554
but still manage to escape the necessity of manual work sometimes 461
allow the nail of the little finger on one hand to grow long 302
as public proof of their privileged status.

Most Greek towns are predominantly commercial centers. 472
Small shops, run by the members of a single family, are far more [366]
typical than any larger enterprise. There is a tremendous proliferation of independent entrepreneurs, working often on a
shoestring. Even the employees of a larger concern are very [441]
likely to dabble on the side in buying or selling some commodity
or service, partly because wages and salaries are low and [465]
hours are short, but partly also because no Greek really likes to [466]
work for someone else if he can possibly work for himself.

This phenomenon is intimately connected with the tight-knit 472
character of Greek families. The members of a family group are 602
ready and willing to work hard for the common benefit, and 466
can usually arrange for a distribution of the profits among themselves without undue quarreling. But a man employed by an outsider, bound to him by no family ties, finds it hard not to feel that he is being exploited. Why should a stranger hire him if not to make something out of him? And why, then, should an employee not do his best to look after himself first and foremost, help his family and relatives next, and let the interests of the larger enterprise in which he is a mere hired hand take a poor third place in his loyalties?

The result is that when enterprises grow large, and employ persons not bound together by family relationships, they tend to lose much of the efficiency and esprit de corps of the small family undertaking. Nepotism and other forms of special favors done for relatives creep in. Given the strength of Greek family ties, promotion by the cold-blooded criterion of the individual's usefulness to an impersonal organization can scarcely prevail

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602 against the clamorous demands of deserving relatives who badly need a job.

466 The strong egalitarian spirit that runs through Greek life
557 works in a somewhat parallel fashion to undermine the effi-
476 ciency of large concerns. When every man feels himself just as good as everybody else, personal loyalty to a superior in a bureaucratic organization is difficult to establish. A bold spirit is sorely tempted to launch some sort of petty intrigue against his immediate boss, in the hope of displacing him and perhaps inheriting the position. More cautious persons are prone to develop a false servility and flattery of their superiors, in the hope
[609] of winning special confidence and favor. Both attitudes interfere with the effectiveness of large-scale organization; and both arise in large part from the underlying distrust Greeks feel toward anyone outside the sacred circle of the family.

Observations such as these are, of course, impressionistic, and it is not difficult to find many exceptions to the rule. Yet no one can deny that petty intrigue, nepotism and a remarkably ruthless pursuit of individual self-interest are far more widespread in Greece than in more industrially advanced countries. Indeed, these psychological characteristics of the Greek people perhaps have much to do with the relatively backward state of their technology, quite apart from the financial and physical difficulties which also hinder the development of large-scale modern industry in the country. Modern technology is, after all, incompatible with small-scale family enterprise; cooperation of larger numbers of men is necessary, and the traditions of the Greek people make such cooperation difficult to achieve.

This psychological attitude clearly makes the position of wage and salary earners less satisfactory than it might otherwise be. Anyone who has had any contact with the fierce intrigue that often disfigures personal relations among a group of Greek employees is likely to wonder how men can endure such ten-

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sions, only to remember how precious a job is to every Greek, 466
and how impossible it is for a man to throw up a position in dis- 557
gust in the hope of finding another and better one. There are, 476
however, other factors which make the position of wage and
salary earners difficult, and foster chronic discontent among
them.

Wages are low, and are constantly in danger of being under- 464
cut by young men coming from the villages in search of work.
Such new arrivals can often afford to work for less than a regu- [465]
lar urban resident, for they have no homes or families to main-
tain, and can, in summer at least, sleep outdoors and eat very
little in order to save a small sum with which to return home in
the fall. As a result, a large part of the building trades, for ex-
ample, is in the hands of migrant labor. Unions can do little to [467]
improve wages or working conditions when dozens of appli-
cants seek every job that opens, and are ready, if need be, to
bid against one another in order to get employment at all. More- 565
over, the prestige accorded to white-collar work and to immu- 578
nity from manual toil obviously puts the working class at a psy- 669
chological disadvantage, and builds up a sense of grievance [554]
among those condemned to labor with their hands.

Like the hill villagers, the workingmen of the towns were [208]
deeply infiltrated by Communist propaganda during the second
world war. Attacks upon the rich, as traitors to the nation and
oppressors of the poor, won widespread response. And indeed,
the conduct of the small group of wealthy men in Greece lent
some color to the accusations which Communists launched
against them. Most men of property felt it more vital to safe-
guard their possessions than to join in any active resistance to
the German and Italian authorities. Many of them exhibited the [609]
same ruthlessness against everyone beyond the family circle
that most Greeks exhibit, and did so even when people were
actually starving in the streets, as they were in 1941. Acts of

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565 generosity and kindliness did something to redeem the balance,
578 but were comparatively rare. The wealthy classes did not, as a
669 rule, show much sign of social conscience or sense of obligation
to the poor. Once again, the solidarity and exclusiveness of family sentiment interfered with larger loyalties and sympathies. The result was that antagonism between rich and poor broke out into the open during the war years, and has never since ceased to trouble the political stability of the country.

458 Economic conditions have been acting, for at least fifteen
465 years, to sharpen this feeling. Since 1941 Greece has experienced
578 a series of monetary inflations that raised prices, sometimes rapidly, sometimes more slowly, but always faster than adjustments were made in wage and salary scales. As prices outran wages, workingmen faced a series of crises, the more serious because their wage rates were low to begin with. Adjustments of wages, when they came, relieved the problem only temporarily until continuing inflation once again robbed the currency of part of its purchasing power.

The economic plight of white-collar employees was nearly the same as that of manual workingmen, for they, too, had to
[554] live on an income that regularly lagged behind the price level.
Moreover, the fact that such persons had gone to school, and therefore felt they had a rightful claim to superior social status, did not make it easier for them to face a life of poverty. The fierce struggle to win a place in the government civil service was only matched by the chronic discontent of those who had succeeded in getting government jobs and then found that they could scarcely live on their salaries.

578 Fortunately for the political stability of the country, wage
669 earners and salaried classes are a minority in Greece. This is no
[565] more than a corollary of the small size and family character of
most Greek economic undertakings. Nevertheless, if one adds the hillsmen of the countryside as a third more or less chroni-

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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cally disaffected class, there emerges a formidable grouping 578
of unstable and potentially revolutionary elements in present- 669
day Greek society. The more conservative groups – farmers of [178]
the plains villages, shopkeepers, traders and property owners in
the towns, and the handful of rich shipowners and other large capitalists – certainly outweigh the dissidents in normal times. But times have seldom been normal in recent Greek history, and the balance of forces has not uniformly inclined in favor of the established social order.

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The winter and spring of 1946–47 were months when the bal- 669
ance turned strongly against conservatism. As a matter of fact, Greece seemed then to teeter on the verge of Communist revolution. The Greek Communist party, acting in concert with the Communist governments and parties of neighboring countries to the north, and with the approval or perhaps under the instructions of the Russians, began to raise guerrilla bands in the mountains of Greece in the summer of 1946. Organizers met with rather quick response in many hill villages, where the young men and boys were stewing in their discontent and welcomed the high hopes held out to them by Communist prom-
ises. The national army was quite unable to check the spread of [703]
the guerrilla movement. For one thing, morale was uncertain.
Many soldiers felt strong distaste for fighting fellow Greeks. When sallies were made from strong points which the army had constructed, the guerrillas simply melted away, only to reappear a few days later somewhere else, soon to return to the same district as before.

The morale of the government was equally uncertain. Com- 669
munist lands were very near; Britain was embarrassed by finan- 648
cial difficulties; the United States was far away. No one was 433

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669 648 433 sure that aid would come, or if it came that it would arrive soon enough and in large enough quantity to turn the tide. Yet foreign aid was clearly needed if the Communist guerrillas were to be stopped. Without it, the government could scarcely hope to maintain its army for long. More than that, the fabric of the civil economy could not stand by itself, especially when guerrilla raids and road mines made transport and communication unsafe.

727 648 Apart from the military and diplomatic aspects, there was another and more fundamental sense in which the morale of the government and of the conservative classes was damaged. The general ideas and presuppositions of the non-Communist politicians and their supporters were badly shaken by the course of events in the immediate postwar period. Their general assumption had been that once the Germans had withdrawn and a transition period of special emergency had been passed through, then the society and economy of Greece would return of themselves to something like stability and the prewar pattern. Yet now the Germans had departed, UNRRA had come and gone (save for a small rear guard), and still there was no stability and no security. Far less was there any prospect of prosperity.

The upheaval of the war years had in fact been too drastic to permit any automatic return to normal. But the political leaders of the country, all of whom had grown up in a world where government economic policy and administration were conceived in terms of doing favors for one's friends and withholding them from one's opponents, had no idea how to cope with the disturbed and unhappy society entrusted to their guidance. No idea, that is, except to ask for help from Britain or the United States. [661]

[665] The politicians could scarcely be accused of not having done their part to bring things back to normal. During the brief res-

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pite between the time when British troops had suppressed the wartime guerrilla army in December 1944, and the resumption of the guerrilla war in the summer of 1946, the politicians resumed the prewar game of politics with an exemplary faithfulness to old customs and methods. Two of the principal figures of Greek politics, Sophocles Venizelos and Constantine Tsaldaris, carried family names that had been illustrious in the twenties and thirties, and owed their leadership more to their names than to any personal attributes. Quarrels between royalists and republicans, which dated back to the first world war, remained the principal line of demarcation between rival groups of politicians; and demands for territorial expansion at the expense of the defeated powers – primarily Bulgaria – remained a major stock-in-trade of political oratory, and the best antidote the political leaders could find for the discontent and unrest of the nation. This, after all, had been the dominant theme in the career of the great Eleftherios Venizelos, who had almost doubled Greek territory between 1912 and 1919, and even for a dizzy moment seemed to have the old Byzantine capital of Constantinople within his grasp. And how could any politician hope to improve on Venizelist models?

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Fame and fortune had always been the stuff and substance of a political career; special favors to friends and supporters had always been the means by which power was sustained; parties had always been fragile coalitions of ambitious public men who combined for a longer or shorter time under the leadership of one of their number, only to scatter and re-form in some new constellation when the restless striving for place and position dictated a change.

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To be sure, even before the war, extensive social legislation had been enacted, and the idea that the government was somehow responsible for maintaining the welfare of the population at large was not unknown. But such measures were conceived

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957

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727 primarily as electoral maneuvers, aimed to win votes, rather
661 than as aspects of any general social policy. A managed econ-
433 omy, or even a semi-managed economy, in which government decisions influenced the flow and volume of investment, regulated the supply of money, and adjusted the share of the national income to be enjoyed by different groups in the population was scarcely within the purview of the old-style politicians. Once again, this was not because the government had not intervened repeatedly and with telling effect in the economic life of the country. It had, but usually in the spirit of helping political or personal friends and thwarting foes.

Yet in spite of the faithful and unimaginative efforts of the political cosmos (the name Greeks give to the small number of men who play leading roles in political life) to return to a comfortable prewar pattern of behavior, the country ungratefully failed to follow suit. The times remained desperately out of joint, but knowing no way to set them right, the conservative politicians and their supporters were in a quandary. Their morale was destroyed by the lack of any clearly defined and firmly felt purpose and program, quite as much as by the diplomatic and material difficulties they confronted. Among the men of the right, apathy and hopelessness alternated with sporadic anti-Communist and extra-legal violence; but neither the one nor the other seemed to do anything but make the situation worse.

665 The Greek Communist party was not without its own internal
727 difficulties, but by comparison with the old-style politicians the Communists had tremendous advantages. First and foremost, they commanded a disciplined, enthusiastic and energetic body of committed followers, men who could be counted upon to follow instructions and who were willing to undergo personal hardship in the service of their dream for the future. Beyond this, the Communists enjoyed the sympathy or admiration of a

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957

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considerable proportion of the population, especially among 665
the workmen of the towns and the peasants of the hill villages. 727
No one can say how large this group was, but to estimate it at about 20 per cent of the nation's total population is a reasonable guess.

Another important asset of the Communists was their wartime record as leaders of resistance against the Germans and [726]
Italians. They could plausibly paint themselves as true champions of Greek national freedom and of democracy, while accusing their opponents of betraying the interests of the nation first to the Axis and then to the British. To be both a patriot and a Communist sympathizer did not therefore seem incompatible.

Finally, and perhaps most important of all, the Communists did have a more or less definite program of action and knew what they wanted. They were able to explain the continued distress of the country as a natural result of the creeping crisis of capitalism. They had a ready cure at hand in the abolition of private ownership of the means of production, as a preliminary to planned industrial expansion, on the Russian model. To many Communist followers, no doubt, the program meant little more than an angry intention to take from the rich and give to the poor, i.e., to themselves, all the good things which had selfishly and unjustly been withheld from them. Others, more sophisticated, realized that there would inevitably be a long period of time when suffering and poverty still would prevail, but believed that in the long run the dream of abundance for all could be realized, if the government planned economic activity and compelled sufficient investment. And no matter what the degree of economic understanding among their followers, the Communists had the advantage of offering the distressed and confused a cause to which to dedicate themselves, an enemy against

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665 727 whom to fight, and a hope for the future. None of the old-line political parties or leaders could do any of these things nearly so effectively.

665 669 Only the inner circle of the Greek Communist party was directly affected by the very real fissure between what may be called "home grown" and "Russian" Communists. The rank and file of party members and sympathizers were perhaps scarcely aware of any such tensions, and accepted without any special notice the transfer of authority over the Greek Communist party from the hands of George Siantos, who had led it during the war years, to those of Nicholas Zachariades, who had spent the war in a German concentration camp. Yet this shift, accomplished in May 1945, represented the assertion of control by leaders trained and directed by Moscow, as against the more independent "home grown" leadership which Siantos had embodied.

In any case, this fissure was only of potential importance. If Russian policy should diverge seriously from lines acceptable to "home grown" Communists, then the factions in the Greek Communist party might be expected to come into the open. So long as no such divergence appeared – and in 1946 and 1947 it did not – the only consequence was to elevate some persons to positions of authority in the party and to blight the careers of others who had thrown in their lot with the defeated side.

665 669 648 727 Hence, in 1946 and 1947 the advantages enjoyed by the Greek Communist party in competition with its rivals were actual, its weaknesses only potential. This was true not only within the country, but internationally as well. The Communist countries to the north began actively assisting the Greek Communist bands, sending arms and ammunition, allowing hard-pressed units to find refuge across the border, and providing hospital and other services to them as far as geographical difficulties permitted. On the other hand, British military and economic

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support for the Greek government was about to be withdrawn, 665
and it was not yet clear that American support would be forthcoming 669
to replace the British. Under the circumstances it is not 648
strange that the Communists went from strength to strength, 727
while their opponents were filled with foreboding for the future.

To be sure, the Communists faced one great obstacle. Their 669
opponents were still in full control of the administrative machine 647
of government. The pattern so successfully followed in eastern European countries which fell within the Russian sphere of influence, whereby Communists first acquired a toehold in the administration and then used their position to push all rivals out, could scarcely be employed in Greece. The police, army and civil bureaucracy were all firmly in anti-Communist hands.
British armed intervention in 1944 had been necessary to secure [648]
this state of affairs, but it was confirmed by elections held in [666]
1946; and the new aggressiveness of international Communist policies did not permit patient waiting until some future election might lead to a coalition including Communist ministers.

Yet the effectiveness of these instruments of power was sadly blunted in Greece. In the countryside the police were too few to resist concerted attack by guerrilla bands. The army was numerous enough, but the morale of the soldiers made offensive actions against the guerrillas difficult and largely ineffective.
The civil bureaucracy was distinguished by its clumsiness and 647
occasional corruption. Efforts to prevent corruption led to excessive 661
centralization, so that even simple decisions had constantly to be referred to Athens, and not infrequently to a cabinet member, before action could be taken. The nomarchs,
the principal local officials in the provinces, characteristically [634]
spent more time in Athens, haunting the central offices of the government in hope of getting needed decisions, money or supplies, than they did in the districts assigned to them. Incidentally, of course, they could thereby consolidate personal rela-

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647 tions with higher authority, promote their own careers, and
661 enjoy the amenities of Athenian existence. But in the meantime much that should have been done remained undone.

Senior officials and ministers were harrassed by incredible numbers of papers requiring their signature or countersignature; they were harrassed even more by the crowds of petitioners who stood outside every door and not infrequently pushed their way inside to watch for a chance to seize the great man's attention. Subordinates, on the other hand, seldom would or could take any initiative themselves, but referred everything to higher authority, where the papers added to the jam at the top.

185 Perhaps the greatest weakness of the whole system was that
727 officialdom shared the intellectual and technical deficiencies of
647 the politicians. In the general confusion and pressure of daily
433 business, no one had time or opportunity to try to think in long terms, measure the economic and other needs of the country, and attempt to establish some sort of priority among them, so that a beginning, however modest, could be made toward repairing some of the disbalances and defects of Greek society. Perhaps the magnitude of the problems and the sheer inadequacy of Greek resources to cope with most of them made such calculations impracticable. But it was also true that the officials of the Greek government were not accustomed to thinking in such terms, and tended to assume that problems of this nature should be left to solve themselves by the spontaneous action of private citizens, within the framework of traditional patterns of living. In proportion as the physical and psychological basis of such a traditional framework had been destroyed by the war, this assumption was no longer valid; but few, indeed, in the turmoil of the civil administration realized this fact, and fewer were ready, intellectually or morally, to try to move into the gaps thus created in the social structure, and attempt to put the scattered fragments back into some sort of working order.

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Under the circumstances, then, nothing like an efficient ad- 647
ministration confronted the Communist challenge. Private citi- 727
zens, who were unable to get satisfaction from officials, even 433
when they knew their claims were right and just, were not encouraged to feel any special loyalty to the regime; and a government which was able to do so little to remedy the general disorganization of economic and social life gave color to the Communists' claim that they and they alone could solve the country's problems.

There were, nevertheless, some persons who were attempting 185
to devise plans for the economic and social stabilization of the 727
country. Some held government positions, some were unem- 433
ployed or semi-employed engineers and the like. Perhaps the 648
most influential circle was that associated with the UNRRA Mission to Greece, which, in addition to delivering relief supplies to the country, had attempted to rehabilitate the nation as well. The time and the funds allocated to UNRRA proved grossly inadequate to rehabilitate Greece, but studies and plans made by UNRRA, to discover what could and should be done to put the country back on its feet, had at least the virtue of turning some men's minds to the long-term problem. Some of these plans, and some of the personnel that helped draw them up, later played a part in the United States aid program.

Apart from this historical connection, one can say that even 185
in the darkest days of 1947, when Communist victory seemed 727
far from improbable, there did exist on the fringes of Greek 433
official life a small number of persons who had begun to think 669
in terms that might effectively meet the Communist challenge. Planners and statisticians, engineers and economists – men who conceived the task of the government to include efforts to shape economic and social development in such a fashion as to relieve the poverty of the nation – did exist. They were, however, far removed from the real centers of power and authority in the

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government. Unassisted, they would certainly not have been able to do anything effective to overcome the Communist menace. 185 727 433 669

To sum up: The nature of Greek society and the shortcomings of the Greek government, together with the constellation of international relations in 1946 and 1947, made Communist revolution possible, indeed probable. But the injection of a massive new force, United States aid, changed the direction of events and prevented that consummation. The activity of the American aid missions will therefore be the subject of the next chapter. [648]

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## CHAPTER 3

# THE VILLAGES

Since most of the people of Greece still live in villages, peasant life constitutes something of a base level for Greek society. Pressure of population is felt first and most acutely in the villages. Peasant boys from land-hungry villages are driven to seek a livelihood in the towns, thus creating a pool of unskilled but eager labor which deeply affects the conditions of life among the urban working classes. Moreover, agricultural products are the country's major items of export. What happens in the villages therefore fixes limits upon the general prosperity and social stability of the entire national community. It follows that the best criterion by which to measure the impact of Amer-

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369 ican aid programs on Greek society is to examine what has been
433 accomplished in a few typical villages, for only after the agrar-
x 178 ian problems of the nation have been somewhat relieved can
there be much expectation of enriching or improving urban
conditions.

621 Two general dividing lines separate the villages of Greece.
184 By far the most important is the contrast, explained in Chapter
433 1, between hill and plain, that is, between food-deficit and food-
surplus rural communities. A second general distinction is be-
423 tween those villages that underwent radical redistribution of
x 178 land after World War I, and those where patterns of landown-
ership have evolved piecemeal and privately without any massive governmental intervention. Generally, villages of the first type lie in the plains of the north, while all hill villages, and plains villages south of Thessaly, fall into the second category. In view of these important differences, it is necessary to study at least one village from each of these groupings.

621 Another point of distinction is the degree to which traditional
184 patterns of village life underwent change during the past ten
x 178 years. Some villages, whether by accident or thanks to intelli-
gent and energetic leadership within the village, were able to undertake quite radical changes and profited very greatly from new techniques of agriculture. Others stayed generally within traditional frames. Still others were able to make only halfway satisfactory changes in old customs and techniques. It seems wise to try to illustrate different degrees of adjustment and improvement, first among plains villages, then among hill villages; and in each case to begin with an example of slight change and conclude with an example of maximally successful adjustment.

621 Before turning to an account of what particular villages have
631 done, however, it might be well to say something about village
578 leadership, and the relations between villagers and officials of
the national government. Until 1951, the villages (and larger

communities) were governed by appointees of the Ministry of 621
Interior. This sometimes led to disharmony and distrust between 631
the inhabitants and their legal representatives. In 1951, [578]
however, elections were organized in villages (and larger communities),
so that for the first time since the war the people [666]
had a chance to choose their own local officials. Villagers elect members of the village council, which varies in size with the size of the community. The council members then choose one of their number as president and another as secretary.

The secretary's duty is to keep village records; but the main responsibilities rest upon the president. He represents the village
in all dealings with the outer world, and has an informal [627]
authority to hear complaints and settle quarrels within the village.
Legal cases, however, lie beyond his competence; they are
dealt with by regular judges, appointed by the Ministry of Justice. [692]

A second center of village leadership is the church. Every 621
village has a church, and the priest is often a native of the village, 793
distinguished from his fellows by a special garb and the
fact that he has attended a seminary for a year or longer. Priests
are appointed by bishops, but a congregation has the right to [794]
refuse a nomination, or to object to a priest it dislikes. In such cases the bishop normally attempts to find someone else to suit the wishes of the community.

A third focus of leadership is the school system. Nearly every 621
village has a primary school, staffed by a teacher who has had 875
at least a secondary school education. Unlike the priest or the
president, he is most often a stranger to the community, appointed [872]
to his post by the Ministry of Education. Here, in many
villages, lies an important point of contact with the outside [609]
world; but just because the schoolmaster is usually an outsider and often a city man, he fails to command in most villages quite the same trust and authority that the priest and president enjoy.

622 As one would expect in any small community whose members
624 are acquainted from childhood, the effectiveness of formal leadership depends very much upon the personalities of the office holders. In some villages, the president and secretary have little real importance. As a minimum, they must keep records to
[702] allow the army to draft the young men when their age group
[653] is called up, and it is their duty to muster the able-bodied villagers for a fixed number of days' labor on roads or other public works when ordered to do so by officials of the central govern-
[651] ment. This labor service is the only form of direct taxation now enforced upon peasants, and money payment may be substituted for personal service if anyone cares to do so.

622 Only when a village chooses to undertake local improve-
631 ments requiring money or supplies from outside sources does
652 the sphere of local government expand from this legal minimum. In such cases, the village president, perhaps assisted by some other members of the council, is expected to represent the village in all dealings with the agents of the central government from whom help is sought; and if the village contracts a corporate loan for some project, then the president becomes responsible for collecting the sums needed to repay the loan.

621 Generally, the villagers of Greece have a deep-seated and not
654 altogether groundless distrust of outsiders, particularly of government representatives, whom they suspect of being more
x 178 often out to fleece than to help them. Long and persistent per-
[609] suasion is therefore usually required on the part of government officials to overcome this suspicion, and open the way for technical or other improvements in village life. More often than not, the initiative in bringing about the changes which have come to many villages in the past ten years came from outside the village, from the central government. Only after a start had been made, and the practical advantage of some new crop or technique had been demonstrated on a small scale, did the farmers

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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crowd around for advice, loans, seed and the like, and begin to turn to their local village government for assistance in bringing further improvements to the community. 621 654 178x

Let us now turn to specific cases, and see what has happened in six representative villages during the past ten years.

### *Villages of the Plains*

#### LOFISCOS

Lofiscos is situated in the plain of Thessaly, about half a mile off the main trunk road between Larissa and Volos. This is a region of hot summers and cold winters, for Thessaly is landlocked, surrounded west, east and south by precipitous mountains, and exposed to cold northern winds coming down from the plateau of western Macedonia in winter. It is the best wheat land of Greece, and wheat is the major — indeed almost the sole — crop raised by the villagers of Lofiscos today. 361 [132] [133] [243]

As the visitor approaches the village over a wandering track, deeply rutted by trucks that traverse the soft earth during the muddy months of winter and spring, Lofiscos looks shabby and ill-kempt. Houses are scattered irregularly; little fresh paint is in evidence. The dominant structure near the center of the village is a half-ruined rectangular stone tower that looks like and in fact once was a small fortress. [487] [356] [712]

Before 1881, the year in which Thessaly was annexed to Greece, this building was inhabited by a Turkish pasha, who owned the entire area which now belongs to the villagers of Lofiscos. The ground floor was his granary and stable; in the upper story the great man lived with his harem. Since 1881 the building has been abandoned and allowed to decay slowly. The scattered huts in which the villagers live also survive from Turkish times in almost every case. The inhabitants are the 361 423 [712] 000

Lofiscos

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423 The inhabitants are the sons or grandsons of men who once tilled the Turk's lands for 427 him on a sharecropping basis. They stayed behind when the [621] Turk departed, and in due course fell heir to his land.

These changes did not happen all at once. When the Turkish landowner left he sold his rights to a wealthy Greek who lived in Larissa. The new landlord continued the old arrangements, with the difference that he was an absentee. Early in the twentieth century, however, widespread peasant unrest manifested itself in Thessaly, and in 1912 a law of expropriation was passed [425] against the large landowners. But it was not until 1920 that the effect of this law was felt in Lofiscos. In that year government surveyors and officials carried out a general distribution of the estate. Every male resident of the village nineteen years old or over was given possession of 137 stremmata of land (34¼ acres). In addition, 15 stremmata (3¾ acres) were assigned to each male member of a community of semi-migratory shepherds who had immemorially used these lands for winter pasture, paying a fee to the owner for the privilege of grazing their sheep on the stubble left after the grain harvest. A thousand stremmata (250 acres) remained in the possession of the absentee land- [621] owner. The rest of the land was left as common pasture. Much of it was unsuited to cultivation because of flooding in the spring; and in any case 137 stremmata was about all the land a single family could easily cultivate with the tools then available to them.

423 The land settlement of 1920 remained essentially unchanged thereafter. Many of the men who received their farms at that time are still alive; five families had moved into the village by 1956, but no one had moved away. The five newcomers owned no land at all, but worked for the established farmers of the village or, more often, on the big estate of the absentee owner. (Incidentally, this estate survived in 1956 as a working unit in spite of the land law of 1952 which forbade ownership of more

Lofiscos

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than 400 stremmata of cultivated land. Presumably the owner had divided legal title among relatives or friends without surrendering real control of his land.) 423

The village is very small. In 1956 its population was only 130,[1] yet it occupies no less than 6,000 acres, excluding the absentee landowner's estate, which is counted as part of the lands of Lofiscos by official government reckoning. This amounts to more than 46 acres per capita; and even though more than half of the land remains rough pasture, subject to flooding for part of every year, such an abundance of land represents solid wealth by Greek peasant standards. And indeed, the village is wealthy. Farmers find little difficulty in accumulating gold sovereigns with which to dower their daughters, for wheat is always in demand and a government purchase scheme keeps the price stable and well above world market levels. In spite of the shabby appearance of their houses and the untidy appearance of their clothes, the families of Lofiscos are, by their own standards, very well off. Almost all of them probably have several hundred gold sovereigns hidden away, but this no stranger could ever expect to know. 621 423 [162] [161] 621 511 [435] [454]

The tribulations of the second world war, of the occupation and of the guerrilla war made almost no impression on Lofiscos. The young men served in the army, of course, and saw something of the outer world. But on their return they seemed to fit back smoothly into the familiar routine. As the guerrillas never 621 178x 669

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[1] This and all subsequent figures for village populations are rough approximations. Village records do not include any sort of census figure. They are confined to registration of births, marriages and deaths, and the most important function they serve is to provide the basis for the annual call-up of military recruits. Moreover, a family often remains registered in a village long after it has moved away; in such instances births and deaths are likely to be omitted from the village books, and may or may not be recorded elsewhere. One must therefore depend upon informal estimates of village officials. This leaves a considerable margin for error, unless the officials consulted are unusually careful. [659] [217]

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621 penetrated so far into the heart of the Thessalian plain, the villagers
x178 saw nothing of them at first hand. Life went on smoothly,
[669] and the market for wheat was good. In general, then, the tenor
of life in Lofiscos is a thoroughly conservative one. In 1920 the
villagers attained their hearts' desire – possession of the land;
and since then nothing has happened to make them wish to
change the way they live.

x178 The general conservatism of the village is reflected in the
241 caution with which the farmers have taken up new techniques
433 and ideas. There was no pressing economic necessity to impel
them to experiment. Familiar methods and crops did well
enough. Yet there are at present real signs of technical change.
[652] In 1952 fertilizer came in for the first time. Up till then no one
in the village had used it. In that year, a representative of the
Agricultural Bank visited the village, and urged the farmers to
[243] buy fertilizer on credit. A few of them made the experiment;
the results they achieved convinced all the rest, for with fertilizer
the wheat crop was nearly twice what had been usual
before. Every farmer is now using fertilizer, and the net production
of the fields is rising accordingly.

[652] Then in 1956 a single farmer, more venturesome than his fellows,
[406] contracted a five-year loan with the Agricultural Bank in
order to install a well and pump with which to irrigate four
[312] acres. This represented a far greater departure from custom
than the use of fertilizer. Wheat does not need irrigation in
Thessaly, and to repay the cost of the well and pump new crops
[248] had to be introduced. Cotton was the answer, and the results
in 1956, when I visited the village, were already so promising
that several other farmers were planning to install a well-pump irrigation system in their fields, and grow cotton the next year. By doing so they can multiply their cash yield per acre several times as compared to the traditional income from wheat farming. This prospect is all the farmers need to persuade them to go ahead.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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Lofiscos

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While I did not come to know the village well enough to be 178x
sure, my impression was that the decisive break-through in 1952 652
was not a matter of new knowledge or information so much as 241
a change in financial attitudes. That is to say, before 1952 the
peasants of Lofiscos looked upon indebtedness with horror.
Anyone who went to a bank and of his own free will incurred
a debt was, they felt, courting disaster. This was not far from
the case in the 1920's and early 1930's when agricultural prices
were uncertain, bank interest high, and foreclosure a possibil-
ity. In 1956 bank interest was still high – between 7 and 8 per [453]
cent for loans to individual farmers – but the price of wheat
was fixed ahead of time by the government, and the price of [435]
fertilizer had been lowered by government subsidy. As a result, [654]
a simple computation could assure the borrower of what he
stood to gain. This was what the farmers of Lofiscos learned in
1952. They allowed the Bank's representative to convince them
that there were times and circumstances when borrowing was
not the first step to perdition, but a sure (or nearly sure) way to
greater income.

Farming in Lofiscos has always, for as long as men can re- 433
call, been mainly directed at market sale. Wheat from the vil- 511
lage has gone to Volos or Larissa year after year, and, since 454
1920 at least, the peasants have been able to buy town products 556
as they wanted them. But in general they have preferred hoard-
ing to spending. In Turkish times, to build a comfortable new 178x
house or to dress elaborately would simply have attracted the [438]
attention of some hungry tax or rent collector; hence there was
a strong motive for concealing behind an unpretentious, indeed
poor-seeming, exterior any wealth that might accumulate. This
attitude apparently survived under Greek administration, even
after the peasants of the village ceased to owe rents to a land-
lord and secured the whole harvest as their own. It still lingers:
hence the shabby appearance of the village and its inhabitants.

If the first important break with old traditional patterns of 178x
241
433

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x178 241 433 life in Lofiscos dates only from 1952, it cannot be surprising to find that as yet little has altered outwardly. But since the village has been attuned to a market economy for generations, and since changes that increase income without involving more than the normal risks of farming meet with little resistance in the village, it seems entirely probable that in the future more and more substantial changes will come to Lofiscos. In 1956 there was still much that could be done to increase the intensity of [312] farming and to enlarge the cash income of the farmers. Well irrigation is easy, because the water table lies close to the surface; and with such irrigation, a wide variety of hitherto untried crops will become possible: vegetables, fruit, fodder, in addition to cotton. The basis for a highly productive and diversified farming may thus appear in a relatively short period of time. Moreover, it would not be difficult or very expensive to build drainage works in the portion of the village lands that flood each spring, thus bringing some or all of that land into cultivation.

Two obstacles stand in the path of any such program of development in Lofiscos. One is the general inertia and conservatism of the farmers, who will have to learn a good deal about new crops and farming methods, and may also find themselves working a good deal more steadily through the year than was necessary when nearly all their land was still in wheat. Yet the means and incentive to overcome this difficulty both seemed to be present in 1956. Agricultural extension agents and the Agricultural Bank stand ready to give expert advice and instruction; and some of the farmers of Losfiscos have shown an eagerness to enrich themselves thereby.

The second problem is more complicated. If the farmers begin to exploit the possibilities of their land more fully, the village will very soon find itself short of labor, for the existing inhabitants are too few to attend to all the chores of high farming

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on so much land. Purchase of machinery, like that used on 178x American farms, would be one way to solve this difficulty; hiring 241 labor from outside the village would be another, and more probable, course. It is conceivable, however, that the villagers 433 of Lofiscos may hesitate about bringing in strangers to work for them. There is a considerable feeling of clannishness among [609 the villagers, a clannishness perhaps reflecting their knowledge that they are far, far better off than the great majority of their 621] fellows, and a desire to keep what they know to be a good thing strictly to themselves. It will not be surprising if, a few years from now, reluctance to hire outside labor begins to hold back the development of more intensive farming in Lofiscos. But if and when the farmers do begin to offer jobs to poor men from the hills, some of the communities that have hitherto seen little benefit from the rising prosperity of villages like Lofiscos will begin to share at least a little in the economic advance of the plains.

All these possibilities lie in the future. In 1956 the village was supplying all its own labor and was just beginning to alter traditional ways. Few villages in Greece are so comfortably situated, and fewer still have such possibilities for further enrichment.

## NEA ELEFTHEROHORI

Nea Eleftherohori lies at the foot of Mount Olympus, facing 361 the Thermaic Gulf, about twenty miles north of Katerini, the 621 local market center and regional metropolis. The name means New Free Village, and is a reminder of the fact that there is an older "Free Village" perched high on the slopes of Olympus. In Turkish times, which lasted in this region until 1912, the men [434] of the older Eleftherohori engaged in a little farming but for the most part depended for their living on the sale of firewood and on summer work as carpenters.

Nea Eleftherohori

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423 The land now occupied by the villagers of Nea Eleftherohori
425 was owned by a Turkish landlord until 1912, and worked by a group of Turkish peasants. These were harried from the land when the Greek army came north in the first Balkan war of 1912. Thereupon, some of the inhabitants of Eleftherohori, together with a large group from another similar hill village, called Katophigi, simply squatted on the vacant land. They apportioned the booty on a first-come, first-served basis, effective title depending on tillage of particular fields. Since there was plenty of land for everyone, this provoked no difficulty.

The situation was radically changed and legally stabilized in 1927 when government authorities surveyed and redistributed
[166] village property. The Greek government was then engaged in settling as many as possible of the refugees who had come from Asia Minor in 1922 and 1923 on land vacated by Turks; but it was not deemed politic to drive the squatters entirely away from what they had seized. Consequently, an estimate of the fertility of the soil was made in order to determine the smallest allotment on which a single family could subsist. In Nea Eleftherohori, the allotment was fixed at 27 stremmata, i.e., 6¾ acres. To permit as many refugees as possible to find land, it was further decided that lots would be assigned only to heads of families, not, as had been done earlier in Lofiscos, to every man, married or single.

As far as the squatters, or "old settlers," were concerned, these policies did not usually involve much loss. To be sure, their holdings were reassigned and particular pieces of land changed hands, but possession was so recent that this in itself did not rouse serious resentment. Moreover, few families failed
x [178] to get as much land as they had previously occupied. When it became known that only heads of families could qualify for an allotment, all the boys of marriageable age, even if only seventeen or eighteen years old, hastened to find themselves wives,

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and thus made good a claim for 27 stremmata. The original 423
squatters' rights had been apportioned on the basis of the 425
amount of land actually tilled by a given family, and as a man 178x
or a boy could scarcely cultivate more than about 27 stremmata single-handed with the sort of equipment they had, the old families received about as much land as they had had before. The difference was that the sons escaped from parental control earlier than they would otherwise have done, since title to their share of the land was now vested individually, not, as traditionally, in the parental family as a whole.

The squatters of 1912 had not occupied all the cultivable 621
land. When they had all received their lots, therefore, almost 167
an equal number of refugees, mostly from the Caucasus area, [423]
were settled on the remainder. The two groups stood more or
less apart, especially at the beginning. Many of the customs of [563]
the Caucasus people seemed wild and barbarous to the old settlers. But because the old settlers felt little or no sense of grievance, and because each family was very nearly on a level of economic equality, with 27 stremmata apiece, the fissure between the two groups was not great. Nevertheless, the houses of the old settlers are still separated by about one hundred yards from those occupied by the refugees, so that the village is physically divided into two quite distinct parts.

In 1932 a supplementary land distribution took place, giving 423
families with more than four members an additional 5 strem- 425
mata; in 1937 a further adjustment was made when forty-three families removed to a newly drained area in the valley of the Aliakmon River, and left their allotments behind, to be reassigned in chunks of 5 stremmata to the larger families of Nea Eleftherohori. No further official changes have since been made, but the natural processes of death and inheritance have resulted in the splitting up of a few of the allotments into smaller farms, while in some cases formerly separate allotments have been

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423 combined into one holding. The great majority of the families
425 of the village, however, still occupied 27 or 32 stremmata in
1956, and most of the original holders of the allotments were still alive.

x 178 The land settlement in Nea Eleftherohori differed from that
621 in Lofiscos in two respects. First, the farms in Nea Eleftherohori
241 were less than one fifth as large as in Lofiscos. Second, the new
settlers, uprooted from their former homes, whether up the
433 mountain or in distant Asia Minor, left binding customary ways of life behind them, and started off in Nea Eleftherohori without the automatic conservatism and suspicion of innovation typical until very recently of the families of Lofiscos. These differences acted together to make the farmers of Nea Eleftherohori a good deal more willing to try new crops and methods, even before the war, than those in the older Thessalian community. Life on so little land was difficult at best, and anything that promised to bring in a little more seemed worth trying; and when the problems of farming the land were new in any event, there was far less psychological resistance against trying some further innovation.

621 Another contrast with Lofiscos, a contrast perhaps related
163 to the general shake-up of old customary routines which came
to the inhabitants of Nea Eleftherohori between 1912 and 1923,
433 is that the new settlers proceeded to procreate children at a far greater rate than occurs in Lofiscos, where families are mostly quite small.[2]

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[2] It would be very interesting to know why the prosperous peasants of Lofiscos have fewer children than their much poorer fellows in Nea Eleftherohori, but I do not know Lofiscos well enough to hazard an opinion. Can it be that the general market orientation of their agriculture and the habit of calculating in monetary terms leads them to restrict the number of their children deliberately, in some fashion or other, realizing that to divide the family farm among many children spells impoverishment for

Nea Eleftherohori

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The smallness of the original farms and the large size of most families in Nea Eleftherohori began, even in the late 1930's, to present the villagers with a very serious problem. What were their children going to do? To divide the land was a desperate solution, inasmuch as the farms were already near the minimum that a single family could subsist upon. Somehow or other, all but one son had to be freed from the land, find some other form of livelihood, and leave the entire farm to be inherited by one brother. Hopeless poverty if not outright hunger was the certain lot of everyone who stayed on a divided inheritance.[3] 428 423

Nea Eleftherohori has been less fortunate than Lofiscos in still another respect. Situated at the foot of Mount Olympus, it lay just on the edge of the territory that guerrilla bands controlled in 1943–45 and again in 1947–49. These were, therefore, years of intense political insecurity in the village, and some loss of life. In 1947 the guerrillas organized a raid upon Nea Elef- 621 669 578

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the new generation? If so, why not in Nea Eleftherohori? To be sure, that village pursued a more nearly subsistence style of agriculture between the wars; but this fact by itself does not seem enough to explain the contrast. Perhaps the prevalence of early marriages in Nea Eleftherohori, consequent upon the mode of land distribution in 1927, accounts for the difference, early marriages naturally bringing larger families; or perhaps some recklessness engendered by the catastrophic upheaval which the Asia Minor refugee population underwent encouraged large families, for there is in Nea Eleftherohori, as in all of Greece, a noticeable differential in birth rate between refugee and "old settler" groups, with the refugees standing higher. 621 163 433 [563]

[3] In legal form, the Greek government retained title to all the land distributed to refugees and squatters after World War I. Part of the original justification for this policy was that it would permit the government to prevent excessive subdivision of peasant farms; and it was still the case in 1956 that legal tenure of each allotment was lodged in a single family head. This, however, did not prevent some families from dividing the allotments in practice among the heirs. Yet the fact that such divisions could not be legalized may perhaps have reinforced the reluctance of the families of Nea Eleftherohori to make them. [656]

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621 therohori and plundered an UNRRA storehouse which had
669 been set up there. This was bad enough from the point of view
578 of the villagers; but what was far more awkward was the fact that sentiment was seriously divided within the village itself. Approximately half the population sympathized more or less completely with the guerrillas, and in 1947–48 about twenty young men and women from the village fought in their ranks. Only three of them returned. In 1947, when I first visited Nea Eleftherohori, the atmosphere was exceedingly tense. No one was quite sure of his neighbor, and no one was sure whether the government or the guerrillas would win in the end. Armed men patrolled the village at night on behalf of the government, and felt free to pay disconcerting calls upon families known or believed to be sympathetic with the guerrillas. Fifteen persons were arrested by the nearby gendarmes after the raid of 1947, and one of them was executed; the rest returned only after two and a half years of detention. The general mood of the village at that time was one of fear and frustration. No one could see any solution to the difficulties of the present, still less those of the future. What could the young boys do who were not needed at home? With no land available in the village, and no jobs obtainable in town, the situation seemed nearly hopeless.

By 1956 the outlook had changed. First of all, the political division within the village had healed over, leaving almost no trace. The renewed solidarity of village feeling dated from 1950, when the president and council of the community – who, as appointees of the Ministry of Interior, were of course leading anti-Communists – asked the local police to release two of the village boys who had returned from serving with the guerrillas and had been arrested on general suspicion. The police acted favorably upon this request, and allowed their prisoners to go free without further punishment. This affair, which showed a degree of magnanimity on the part of the anti-Communist lead-

Nea Elef-therchori

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ers of the village since a son of one of them had been caught 621
and killed in a guerrilla ambush near the village during the war, 669
inaugurated a new era in Nea Eleftherohori. Everyone felt relieved 578
that old feuds were not to be pursued, and made haste
to forget the quarrels that had so long divided the village.

More important, or at least more promising for the long run, 178x
was that after 1950 the villagers began to see some hope of a 873
solution to their long-range difficulties. This hope was based
on two innovations. They began to send nearly all their younger
sons to secondary school, hoping thereby to qualify them for
jobs in town, away from the land. And they began to intensify [241]
their farming and to increase their cash income by raising market [434]
crops on a far greater scale than before.

The path to higher education was greatly facilitated by the
proximity of a gymnasium (i.e., a "classical" high school), located
in a large village about ten miles away. A bus service was
instituted between Nea Eleftherohori and the school, enabling [494]
boys from the village to attend classes and still live at home.
Since there were no tuition fees, secondary school education became [511]
comparatively cheap; though even so, the cost of books
and other supplies was, for many families, a serious matter. By
1956 no fewer than thirty-six boys from Nea Eleftherohori were
attending the gymnasium. This number included almost every
boy of appropriate age who had an elder brother, that is, almost
every boy who would not inherit a farm. Roughly one third of
all the families of the village had a boy in the gymnasium.

Since 1950, a number of changes in farming methods have 178x
also occurred. The first was the use of fertilizer. A few farmers 241
had experimented with it before the war, but it cost so much 433
that they found that in a year of bad or only middling weather
they could not make enough on the extra yield of their fields to
pay off the debt incurred to buy it. Hence use of fertilizer was
abandoned, to be resumed only in 1950. By 1956 "everybody"

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957

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By 1956 "everybody"

x178 was using fertilizer, and yields of wheat (the principal crop
241 for which fertilizer was needed) had increased to between 125
433 and 180 okes per stremma, as against the former range of 60
[243] to 80, depending of course on weather and variations in the
quality of the land.

Even before the war, the farmers of Nea Eleftherohori had
shown themselves willing to try new crops. Thus in 1947 there
were modest acreages in legumes, cotton and tobacco as well as
x178 some vegetables. Only tobacco did well, since there was no
249 irrigation; but government regulations forbade extension of to-
bacco acreage, in order to maintain prices. By 1956 this restric-
433 tion had been removed for the district in which Nea Elefthero-
[656] hori is situated, and the farmers promptly began to increase
[435] their tobacco planting. In 1947 there had been a total of 52
stremmata in tobacco; in 1955 there were 480, and in 1956 no
less than 898. Tobacco has in fact become the main labor-con-
suming crop, and it has also become the all-important cash crop
[434] for the village. Money income has multiplied several times over
with the spread of tobacco cultivation, for earlier, when wheat,
[241] raised without benefit of fertilizer, was the main crop, there
was often very little left to sell after the families had supplied
their own food needs.

x178 A second major departure occurred in 1956. With the help
241 of a bank loan, the village planted an olive grove on 900 strem-
464 mata of rough pasture. It will take ten years for the new trees
to come into full production; but when they do, Nea Elefthero-
[245] hori will have a new and valuable crop, with the special virtue
[452] of requiring labor at a season of the year when other agricul-
tural operations are more or less at a standstill. By combining
grain farming (requiring labor in the early fall for planting and
in the late spring for the harvest) with tobacco raising (requir-
ing intensive labor in the early spring and for about two months
in the late summer when the leaves must be picked daily and

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strung up to dry) and olives (harvested in the late fall and the 178x
early winter), the village will be able to distribute its labor 241
over nearly the entire round of the year, and minimize the long [464]
seasonal idleness which was characteristic of its older grain-centered
type of agriculture.

Another way of describing what has happened in Nea Eleftherohori [433]
is to say that during the past five or six years commercial
agriculture has largely supplanted a primarily subsistence
type of agriculture. Related to this development is a very 178x
great change in the appearance of the village and of its inhabitants. 511
Increased money income, deriving from tobacco, has 356
been spent, in part, for city-type clothes, which every self-respecting
villager has by now acquired. In part, too, money has [291]
been used to fix up the houses, which now appear very clean
and tidy. Almost all have been freshly painted or whitewashed,
and several families have fenced in tidy yards where a vine [351]
trellis gives shade from the sun. On the surface, Nea Eleftherohori
appears far more prosperous than Lofiscos. Apparently, a
fairly high level of housekeeping has become standard in Nea
Eleftherohori, and a great effort is made by almost everyone to
present a good front to the neighbors.

The refugees from Asia Minor constitute a partial exception [563]
to this rule. Their houses are somewhat shabbier, their dress
perceptibly poorer. The old settlers look down upon them as
careless farmers and poor housekeepers. The differences are not
really great, but the desire to keep ahead of the refugees has
probably acted as an important spur to laggard or lazy members
of the old settler group, forcing them to improve their
homes and to dress better than they might otherwise have done.

Indeed, if I understood the spirit of the village correctly, the 178x
desire to maintain a status and keep a respectable front to the 511
world has become the overriding aim of the whole community. 582
One very important consequence is the postponement of mar-

x 178 riages. Until the means for living respectably can be assured,
511 the families of Nea Eleftherohori are no longer willing to allow
582 their children to marry, nor do the children themselves wish it.
[583] In 1956, a young man who would inherit a farm of 27 stremmata expected his bride to bring with her a dowry of about 300 gold pounds. This is a truly extraordinary figure for any family in the village to raise, equal to $3,000 in American currency and considerably more in local purchasing power. Ten or fifteen years of strenuous saving are required to accumulate so much, all the more since appearances have to be maintained in
[589] the meantime, and this takes money too. Consequently, a good many men and women in their thirties and some in their early forties remain unmarried.

x 178 Once again, a partial exception must be made for the refu-
582 gees, among whom the dowry system is not so universal and
583 binding as among the old settlers, and who still sometimes
[563] marry young and before the new family has any assured means of support. But the dowry system is said to be spreading among
[626] them too; and the disdain (mingled perhaps with a certain envy) with which the old settlers speak of the refugees' irresponsible marriages makes it clear that the strongest sort of social pressure is at work to prevent such occurrences.

[168] Apparently the people of Nea Eleftherohori are making use of an old custom, the dowry, to regulate population growth. Quite consciously and deliberately, they seek to keep their numbers within the limits imposed by their economic position; or, to put it the other way around, the villagers are determined not to sink into poverty, or to allow their children to do so; and by postponing marriages they know they can avoid the disaster of having too many mouths to feed.

163 The birth records of the village show what has been accom-
168 plished in this direction. Before 1939 the number of births
621 annually recorded never sank below 42, and went as high as 77

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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in 1933. Since the war the number of recorded births has never exceeded 19, and sank as low as 11 in 1953. Deaths have declined also, but not as sharply, so that the natural increase of the village population in the early 1950's ranged from 6 to 12 persons a year instead of the 30 to 40 a year of the early 1930's. This decrease is the more striking since the total population of the village grew from something like 450 at the time the basic distribution of land was made in 1927 to 875 in 1956. 163 168 621 [162]

Two defects are obvious in the adjustment which the people of Nea Eleftherohori are making to their straitened circumstances. In the first place, there is no certainty that the boys pursuing a secondary school education will be able to find jobs when their training is completed. In 1956, there were three or four graduates of the gymnasium living in the village, waiting for something to turn up. One of them was working as a laborer on a road gang – a fate considered a terrible indignity to an educated man, even by his peasant relatives. But I was told that so far, "sooner or later," everyone who had finished the gymnasium course had been able to get a job in town, usually in the government civil service; and the parents who were sending their boys to school seemed to have no serious doubts that in due course their sons, too, might find a government desk to sit behind. If their hopes should be betrayed, then of course the whole campaign for maintaining family standards of living will be in danger of breaking down. Bitter disillusionment and discontent may then gain ground, especially among the educated young men. This is a real danger, for even a civil service as capacious as that of Greece cannot absorb indefinitely the gymnasium graduates of many villages like Nea Eleftherohori; and, of course, the gymnasium training does not prepare the boys for anything but white-collar work. 178x 873 464 [647] [647]

The second defect is psychological. Long postponement of marriage through the dowry represents a drastic alteration 178x 582 583

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957

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x178 582 583 of older peasant customs. The dowry has always been a part of marriage customs in Greece, but it used to be relatively small and easily within the means of the average family. Moreover, not to marry off one's daughters at a rather early age – before twenty-two or so – was regarded as a disgrace. It was felt that something must be wrong, either with the girl or with her parents; that she was running a grave risk of immorality and consequent loss of reputation; and that the parents were delinquent in their duty if they failed to marry her off in the bloom of her youth. Because the new customs run contrary to these older attitudes, a very special tension exists among the farmers of Nea Eleftherohori. They feel it is wrong that their young people cannot marry when they should; they feel even more strongly that marriages must wait until the means of livelihood are assured. This requires the new dowry and land inheritance pattern. But no one is happy with the way the system has worked out, particularly the young people themselves, who see a long and dreary time of waiting ahead before they can hope to start families of their own.

x178 369 This discontent is compounded by the feeling, which seems very strong in the village, that people in the towns have the best of everything: less work, more income; less boredom, more excitement. City standards of dress and manners have made extraordinary inroads in recent years, and aspiration toward a more comfortable and less laborious life is very strong.

x178 621 669 433 Consequently, although by economic criteria the village is very much better off than before, and although the political tensions within the village have sunk back into insignificance, discontent is much alive and near the surface. It no longer takes political form as it did during and immediately after the war, when the Communists appealed to, and found a response among, many of the young people. As long as the majority of families in the village continue to see a path by which they

Nea Eleftherohori

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may expect to maintain or modestly increase the standard of 178x
living they have enjoyed hitherto, it is likely that discontent 621
will remain personal and private. As yet, hard work, saving and 669
waiting seem to promise a solution; and with such hope present 433
discontents seem bearable. But if some day the hopes turn out to have been in vain, then one may expect to see an active movement of political dissent and revolt appear in Nea Eleftherohori once more.

As compared with Lofiscos, therefore, Nea Eleftherohori is 178x
a good deal farther along the path toward a new social and psy- 621
chological adjustment of village life. The less spacious eco- 433
nomic base from which Nea Eleftherohori started compelled 369
an earlier and more energetic adoption of new agricultural tech- 241
niques; the old-fashioned frame in which the peasant family and community flourished from time immemorial has largely been transformed or discarded; and city standards have come in, not so much in fact as in aspiration.

PALEO CORINTHOS

Paleo Corinthos, or Old Corinth, stands on the site of the an- 621
cient city, on the isthmus between the Corinthian and Saronic [361
gulfs. The imposing mass of Acrocorinth, crowned by extensive 172]
and well-preserved Venetian fortifications, dominates the village, whereas the ruins from classical times are comparatively inconspicuous. The modern town of Corinth lies on the shore some five miles off, and has taken over the commercial functions once centered in the ancient city. Until very recently, Old Corinth remained the mere village it had been in Turkish times.

It is, however, a much larger village than either Lofiscos or [162]
Nea Eleftherohori. Its population was officially reckoned to be 1,530 in 1947; by 1956 the figure had grown to 1,850. This
growth was only partly due to natural increase, for the village [166]

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957

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Paleo Corinthos.

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621 had acquired sixty "heads of family," mostly migrants from hill
166 villages in the neighborhood, during the years between 1950 and 1956. Some of these immigrants brought families with them, others married into the village, but exact figures of the number of persons who have moved into the village are not available.

Nevertheless, Old Corinth definitely exhibits the pattern of internal migration which may in time allow the hillsmen of Greece to share in the rising prosperity of the villages of the plains, for migration into the community from the hills has been in part offset by another current of migration from Old Corinth into larger urban centers – either to nearby New Corinth or to Athens, some seventy miles off. Thirty-five to forty persons moved away to these centers between 1947 and 1956, according to the village president.

245 The reason for this mobility is that Old Corinth has become
439 prosperous as never before. For centuries the agriculture of the community has centered upon currants; and since the seventeenth century the major market for this crop has been in England. Commercial agriculture is therefore no novelty, but the prosperity of the village has long been heavily at the mercy of the English market, and, more recently, access to this market has depended largely upon the Australian currant crop. To cultivate, pick, dry and sort currants is a labor-consuming task; and the Australian labor shortage in the postwar years proved
[436] a remarkable blessing for Corinth. Since 1954, when devaluation of the drachma cleared the way for export, currant prices have been good.

241 This is only a small part of Corinth's good fortune. Owing
474 largely to unusually wise and energetic leadership on the part
433 of the village president, who has enjoyed a unique standing in the community, the two cooperatives which were organized
× 178 before the war and were bankrupted during it were re-established by 1952.

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lished by 1952. Through their instrumentality a series of im- 241
portant changes have come to the agriculture of the village. 474
Fertilizer, bought through the cooperatives, has played its usual 433
role in increasing wheat yields. In addition, a new variety of 178$^{x}$
wheat has been introduced by the agricultural extension agent;
this has still further increased the harvest, so that in 1956 the [242]
farmers counted on between 200 and 300 okes of wheat per
stremma, compared with their prewar expectation of 80 to 100.
The co-ops also have been able to buy two tractors and two [407]
harvesting machines that cultivate all the crop land of the com-
munity. These machines are hired out to neighboring villages [427]
when not needed in Old Corinth, and bring in a fair sum of
money.

The most significant step, however, has been the drilling of 178$^{x}$
irrigation wells. Irrigation began on a modest scale before the 312
war, but in 1947 fuel for the pumping engines was hard to 241
come by and many of the thirty wells the village then possessed
were not used fully. By 1956 the number of wells and pumps 406
had increased to 163, and all were in full use. Most of the suit- 433
able land in the village has come under irrigation. On this land, [438]
the villagers raise garden vegetables, especially tomatoes, and
despatch them daily to the Athens market by truck. The result, [434]
in terms of money income, is spectacular. I was assured that a
farm now yields ten times the income it supplied before the
war.

Old Corinth has also benefited from the revival of tourism. 178$^{x}$
In 1955, some 72,000 tourists visited the archaeological museum [457]
and the ruins on the outskirts of the village; and most of these
visitors left at least some small change behind them in one of [265]
the coffee houses or in the new tourist restaurant which the [346]
government constructed in 1955. Moreover, Old Corinth lies
near the new electric power line. Electricity came to the village [365]
for the first time in 1956. Of all the changes benefiting them in

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x 178

365 recent years, this was the one the villagers most praised, per-
haps because it was the newest.

423 Very considerable inequalities in landholding exist within
the village. As a result, some families have profited far more
than others from the new prosperity. Since the Greek War of
Independence (1821–30), if not before, landholdings in Old
Corinth have not been disturbed by wholesale government ac-
tion, of the sort characteristic in the northern part of the coun-
[425] try. The processes of inheritance and marriage settlements,
supplemented by purchase and sale of land – something almost
unheard of in the northern villages – have resulted in the es-
tablishment of extremely complicated property relationships.
[427] Renting and sharecropping are both common. In addition,
many fields are subject to concurrent rights held by several
423 individuals. This situation arises when heirs have refrained
428 from subdividing an inheritance because such division would
476 reduce the fields to absurdly small dimensions. Instead it has
long been the custom to cultivate such fields as a unit and to
divide the proceeds, according to some agreed proportion,
among all those who have a claim thereto. Over the generations,
such concurrent rights have sometimes ramified widely; but the
complications of remote family and property relationships are
something Greek peasant farmers are able to keep very clear
in their heads, with or without written documents.

241 A substantial proportion of the inhabitants of Old Corinth
464 possess no land at all. They make a living by working for others,
either for day wages or on a sharecropping basis. With the in-
465 troduction of tomatoes and other vegetable crops, together with
[427] the revival of the currant market, a definite, though seasonal,
shortage of labor has appeared. Substantial farmers (that is,
men owning 10 to 20 acres of land) complained of not being
able to find enough hands to help them cultivate their fields,
even though the wages they paid in the currant fields were

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higher than wages for unskilled labor in Athens. It is these wage 241
rates, of course, that have attracted new settlers from the hills; 464
but the fact that such labor is seasonal, lasting for only about 465
four months in the year, means that families depending entirely
on wage work are often in very hard straits.

The unparalleled prosperity that the years since 1953 have 178x
brought to the farmers of Corinth has been accompanied by 463
the development of a number of nonagricultural occupations
within the village. Several new stores and two new coffee [366]
houses have come into existence as well as the fancy restaurant
for tourists. A number of persons also make a living as tourist [485]
guides. The richest men in the village, however, are merchants [438]
who have organized the delivery of tomatoes and other vegetables
to the Athens market; they employ truck drivers, not all [494]
of whom live in the village. The two cooperatives employ, between [474]
them, a full-time, professionally trained secretary. The
museum has a small staff of caretakers and curators. The village [871]
school had 210 pupils in 1956 and employed three teachers.
A priest officiates in a handsome new church, which the
villagers have built out of their own resources. Old Corinth, in 621
other words, is developing into a small town, and ceasing to be 178x
a mere village. If the plan, only talked about in 1956, for establishing
a small canning factory to preserve tomatoes is ever
realized, the transition to a town status will become definite.

Nevertheless, from one point of view, the community has so
far remained thoroughly traditional in its social organization.
The substantial farmers of Old Corinth continue to adhere to
age-old patterns of family life. When it comes time for their [583]
children to marry, the daughters are dowered, partly with
money and partly with a share of crop land, vineyard and olive [428]
grove; and sons, similarly, inherit their portion of the parental
farm. Clearly, if there are more than two children – and this is
almost universally the case – the new generation will have to

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621 ×178 face life on a smaller piece of land; but this problem does not
seem especially acute to the larger farmers. An interesting in-
[428] dicator of this fact is that in 1956 only thirty boys from the vil-
[873] lage attended the gymnasium in New Corinth close by – a
smaller number than Nea Eleftherohori was sending to a considerably more distant school, though the population of Old Corinth is nearly three times as great as that of the Macedonian
[433] village. As a matter of fact, the recent increases in the yield
from Old Corinth's land have been so great that a new family
[571] can face life with equanimity, even owning only half as much
land as their parents possessed.

621 For the landless segment of the population, and for those
×178 who own only a tiny plot insufficient to maintain a family any-
571 way, the problem is quite different. Here the major considera-
433 tion is not land but wages; and as long as there is work, and wages are comparatively good, the new generation can start off with little or nothing but a strong back and willing hands, and
[582] hope to make out about as well as their fathers have done. For
them also, there is no overwhelming pressure to postpone marriage in order to keep up a standard of living.

621 As a result, the population statistics of Old Corinth do not
163 show nearly so drastic a change from the prewar years as is
evident in Nea Eleftherohori. Yet the birth rate has dropped in
165 Old Corinth also. In the 1930's (when the population of the village was, of course, a good deal smaller) recorded births ranged between 58 and 46 each year. Since 1947 the range has been from 46 to 33. This change, however, has been nearly offset by a parallel drop in the death rate. Before the war, deaths averaged close to 30 each year; since 1947 the average has been
[744] a little over 12. The drop has mainly been due to the elimination of malaria through DDT; whereas Old Corinth was formerly one of the many places in Greece badly afflicted by that disease, there was no malaria in 1956.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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Particularly fortunate conditions in Old Corinth – tourism, 178x
irrigation, the proximity to the Athens market, and the effective 621
leadership of the village president – have permitted the villagers 511
to maintain their old family customs almost unchanged,
and in spite of the rapid growth of population which such customs
entail, they have not had to sacrifice their standard of living.
Instead, living conditions have improved, with electricity,
tractors and the like.

This is a situation very rare in Greece. It makes Old Corinth
the happiest village I visited, a community at peace with itself
and with the world, mildly surprised by the prosperity that
has descended upon it, and generally well content with the way
things are going. The contrast is strong with the internal condition 621
of the village in 1947, when, like Nea Eleftherohori, the 578
community was sharply divided between left and right. In 1947,
indeed, the bitterness between the two political parties was far 565
deeper than in Nea Eleftherohori, for in Old Corinth the political
lines were drawn, more or less exactly, between farmers and
landless men, that is, between buyers and sellers of labor. Two [669]
particularly squalid "political" murders occurred within the village
in the last days of the German occupation; and the Communist-inspired
regime, which lasted for a few months in 1944,
aroused strong revulsion among the substantial farmers. These
memories now seem almost forgotten, though the sense of solidarity
between rich and poor in Old Corinth is by no means
so strong as the community feeling among the villagers of Nea
Eleftherohori, where everybody is nearly equal economically.

The inequalities in landholding, and the existence of a fairly numerous landless class in the village, certainly constitute a potential source of trouble. If currant and tomato prices should fall, or if more migrants from the hills should come to the village and push wages down by competing for jobs in the fields, the existing harmony and general satisfaction could easily

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621/ break down. The more elaborate social stratification and intri-
578 cate economic integration which the development from simple
565 village into small town involves carries with it a special vulnerability: vulnerability to fluctuations in distant markets, and vulnerability to social stresses within the community itself. This is perhaps the price Old Corinth has to pay for its remarkable economic progress in recent years.

x178 This progress may remind us that there is another sense in
621 which the social structure of Old Corinth shows itself far more
556 flexible and hospitable to innovation than the other villages described. For while family and marriage customs have not undergone important modification, the occupational patterns of the community have shown important changes; and in at least one instance a landless and once very poor man has risen to a position of wealth and importance by becoming a successful merchant. Old Corinth has given far more scope to individual and cooperative enterprise than either Lofiscos or Nea Eleftherohori. Yet this development, too, is in line with old Greek tradition. The self-made man, particularly the self-made merchant or storekeeper, rising to wealth and respectability by virtue of his mother wit and shrewdness in buying and selling, has been a prominent figure in Greek society for at least two centuries; and it has always been the marginal man in the village social hierarchy – the man who has had no land to keep him busy – who has naturally gravitated to such occupations when opportunity has opened. Innovation in Old Corinth has thus taken traditional forms.

x178 Since 1912, rural Greece has been fundamentally divided be-
184 tween villages like Old Corinth, which can look back to genera-
423 tions of substantially undisturbed evolution, and those villages
621 where within recent memory radical governmental intervention entirely transformed earlier landholding patterns. The division is geographical. In Old Greece, meaning Greece within the

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boundaries that existed before 1881, village life has not suffered 178 x
drastic upheaval since 1821, if then. Changes have come slowly 184
and by evolution. The case is far otherwise in New Greece — 423
Thessaly, Macedonia, Epirus and Thrace. There the violent 621
elimination of Turkish landlords and peasants through war was followed by governmental creation of egalitarian peasant communities. This amounted to an agrarian revolution from above, in some cases fully satisfying the peasants — as in Lofiscos — but often failing to do so, as in Nea Eleftherohori.

The slower evolution of village life in Old Greece has meant, 178 x
at least until the present, the preservation of a fairly firm cake 184
of custom, governing the daily lives of the inhabitants. In this 621
respect, Old Corinth is quite typical. Consequently, in spite of 669
the contrast between rich peasant and landless laborer, the so-
cial stratification within these peasant communities has not [565]
bred so many revolutionists as have been bred by the hardships of life in an equality of poverty, characteristic of many villages in the north. Conservatism, royalism, traditionalism have all centered in the south; while radicalism, republicanism, restlessness and revolution have found their strongest expression in the north.

Yet while these generalizations are true, I must hasten to add that the villages of the plains never were the main centers of political revolt. Too many had too much to lose in such communities. Rather it was in the hill villages, where life was harder and the prospect of maintaining a given standard of life was dimmer, that revolution found its most congenial ground. Since the latter part of the eighteenth century, if not before, this has been the really vulnerable point in Greek society, the source of major disturbance and of recurrent civil violence. In the hills, even more than in the plains, the future stability or instability of Greek society is likely to be decided in time to come, as it has in times past. Let us therefore leave the plains and turn to the hills.

## *Hill Villages*

### KOTTA

621 Kotta is situated in the far northwestern corner of Greece,
[361] about five miles from the Albanian border, and not more than
fifteen miles from the point where Yugoslavia, Albania and
[133] Greece adjoin. Flowing past the village is a small stream which
in due course descends to join the Aliakmon River. The valley
[311] slopes are steep, and the villagers possess only 500 stremmata
(125 acres) of arable soil. Much of this is thin patches on the
hillsides; of good bottom land the community has less than ten
acres.

722 When I visited the village in 1947, the inhabitants were starv-
669 ing. Seemingly innumerable children peeped out from every
[731] house, many of them showing bloated bellies beneath motley
rags that served as clothing but scarcely covered their naked-
ness. The village was then in the hands of the guerrillas, who
had stationed a detachment of fifteen boys (the eldest was not
[191] more than eighteen) in the community. The ordinary speech
was Slavic, and at least some of the villagers felt that it would
[619] be better for them if their village belonged to Yugoslav Mace-
donia. Macedonian national feeling may have played some part
in this attitude, but probably the major determinant was the
knowledge that conditions across the border were not quite so
hard as those they faced in Greece.

The people of Kotta were, indeed, living under war condi-
[491] tions. The Greek army had blocked the main road between
Florina and Kastoria, which runs not far from the village site,
and no vehicles could pass without special permits; men could
still get through on foot by taking off across open country, but
[464] there was little incentive to do so. Work could not be found
down in the plains, and a man from Kotta, with the trace of a
Slavic accent in his Greek, was courting arrest or a beating if he

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ventured into territory controlled by the Greek army or police. 722
Resentment against the Greek authorities was widespread, although 669
one man in the village, in speaking to me privately, [464]
made it clear that he at least did not like to contribute to the
upkeep of the guerrilla garrison that controlled the village.

The population of the village was 630 persons, of whom over 621
200 were under fifteen years of age. Thus there was about one 433
fifth of an acre of agricultural land per head, land that was miserably
poor to begin with. Clearly the village could not live on [162]
its agriculture; and even when it had been safe to graze sheep [511]
on the barren mountain slopes, as it was not in 1947, the village
still could not begin to maintain itself on local resources. The
villagers calculated that they could produce food for about four
months in the year; the deficit had to be made good outside.

In prewar years two means had been found to make ends
meet. The men of the village were accomplished masons, and [463]
traveled far and wide over Greece seeking work as builders. In [333]
addition, they found work in various sorts of heavy construction [464]
– road building, irrigation works and the like. But in 1947
such jobs were not to be had, at least not by men with a Slavic
accent.

The second, and perhaps more important, resource was remittances 621
from abroad. The village had begun to send men overseas, 433
mainly to Canada and Australia, even before the first 457
world war. During the interwar years, the migration had continued 167
despite growing barriers to free movement. In Toronto,
Canada, and in Sydney, Australia, natives of Kotta had founded
regular little colonies, and the members of these emigrant
groups, all of whom were related to one another in some degree,
helped to finance the continued emigration. Each family expected
to send at least one son overseas, and that son was in
turn expected to send back enough of his earnings to keep his
parents fed and clothed, and to help out his brothers and sisters
who stayed home.

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000
722 who stayed home. When the Greek army interrupted communi-
511 cation with the outside world this vital supply of cash was cut
[669 off. In 1947, therefore, the villagers were trying to spread out
four months' food over the twelve months of the year.
457] Their diet was cornbread and little else. Nearly all of their
[262 sheep, whose milk had once helped to correct the deficiencies of
a maize diet, had been slaughtered during the occupation; and
164] the prevalence of skin diseases and a certain lassitude in their
movements clearly indicated that malnutrition was added to
[263] undernourishment. They missed salt more acutely than any-
thing else. There had been none in the village for several weeks
when I was there.

669 Kotta remained in guerrilla hands until August 1949. It was
722 luckier than some of its neighboring communities inasmuch as
621 there was no fighting in the immediate environs, so that the
161 houses of the village escaped without more than casual damage.
But the villagers could not escape from famine, nor from dis-
ease that naturally followed in the wake of prolonged and dras-
[162] tic undernourishment. When I returned in 1956, the population
of the village had shrunk to 188, less than one third of what it
had been in 1947. The average number of persons per family
had declined to 2.4, whereas in 1947 families with fewer than
three children were a rarity and five or six children per family
was closer to the average.

About one hundred of the former inhabitants of the village were simply missing. They had gone off, in desperation, looking for food or safety and had not come back. Most, presumably, had died or been killed. In addition, the village priest said that about fifty of the village men were known to have been killed while serving with the guerrillas; and five families had moved west across the Albanian frontier in 1949 when the guerrilla re-
669 treat took place. But the largest single factor in the decline of
728 population was the removal of the village children by the guer-
621
161

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rillas. A total of 225 children, between the ages of two and 669
twelve, had been taken north in the early stages of the war, and 728
only three had returned. A few letters had come from some of 621
them, originating in places as remote as Turkestan, Poland and 161
Czechoslovakia; but most had not been heard from, and no one
in the village knew whether they were alive or dead.

The evacuation of the village children may well have been
conceived by the guerrilla authorities as a humanitarian measure.
Considering the state of the village as I saw it in 1947, such
an interpretation seems quite plausible. This was not the way
the bereft parents viewed the matter, however. They gave no
very coherent explanation of why the children were taken, but
the abduction was remembered in 1956 as the greatest crime
the guerrillas committed. Not a few parents have been left [842]
childless, and this, by traditional village standards, is a bitter
disaster. Who will look after them in their old age?

Still another factor in the drastic depopulation of Kotta has 621
been emigration. As soon as communications with the outside 161
world became possible again, relatives rallied round in Toronto 167
and Sydney, and helped a total of fifty-six persons to emigrate.
The process is still going on. When I visited the village in 1956, 457
a young man and his mother were on the verge of departure for
Australia, where they would join cousins who were financing
the voyage.

Yet in spite of the sorrows which have visited every family in 727
the village, and in spite of the terrible suffering all have been
through, the spirit of the village in 1956 seemed amazingly re- 621
laxed and calm – almost happy. The survivors gave the impres- 511
sion of being profoundly surprised to find themselves still alive.
But what is more important, everyone now has enough to eat. [457]
The village land can feed the population; there is now no need
to look for work outside; and remittances from abroad permit
some families to indulge in small luxuries – kerosene lamps, for
example.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957

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727 621 example. I even saw two fine Swiss watches on the wrists of young men dressed in homespun.

[571 657] In the immediate postwar period, Kotta benefited somewhat from government help. The villagers were given glass to repair the windows of their houses, and some lumber for doors and window frames, so that their houses are in better repair today [491] than in 1947. In 1954 a stout stone bridge was built across the stream with government funds, and the villagers made a rude road to connect Kotta with the outside world. Vehicles can therefore come into the village, though few come, since the villagers have little need of anything from beyond their own small valley.

[241 233] Their agriculture is much the same as before, with corn almost the sole crop. The village flock of sheep is slowly growing back to prewar proportions, thanks in part to the government's having given each family four sheep as a start. The [492] village also has a few cattle – another government gift – which not only yield milk but are harnessed to the plows as well. All this represents a return to familiar patterns.

x 178 241 233 [242] The only agricultural innovation that has so far come to Kotta is the experimental sowing of alfalfa on one of the good acres of bottom land. This measure was recommended to the village by a government extension agent in the hope of remedying one of the crying weaknesses of its traditional economy – the lack of winter fodder for animals. Leaves cut from trees and dried cornstalks have been normal winter fare for cattle and sheep; and since the village stands more than two thousand feet above sea level, the winter is both long and severe. As a result the animals emerge thin and weak from the winter months. Yet the villagers are not altogether convinced that the new crop is worth while. Alfalfa was planted for the first time in 1955, and while it did help to feed the cattle, the new crop occupied one of the best pieces of bottom land the village possesses, where

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corn for human food grows better than in almost any other spot. 178x
To replace human with animal food on such land is a consider- 241
able sacrifice – too much of a sacrifice if the population of the 233
village should once again begin to grow.

As things are today, the villagers lead a very leisurely life. 669
Work in the fields takes at most three months of the year. There 621
is no need of outside work, and no one attempts to find it. For
nine months of the year, consequently, the men have plenty of [241]
time on their hands. They use it in sitting around the village and [517]
talking. Their talk is easy and friendly. Men who fought on
opposite sides in the guerrilla war could joke about it without
any trace of bitterness. As a matter of fact, many of the sur-
vivors had fought on both sides, first with the guerrillas and
then with the Greek army. Those who stayed with the guer-
rillas were killed, or else disappeared into Albania. Except for
the loss of their children, there seems no inclination to blame
the guerrillas for what happened; nor is there any perceptible
hostility against the Greek government. The general feeling
about the war is that it was all an absurd nightmare in which
the villagers themselves were no more than victims, rather than
participants. As Slavs, the villagers cannot easily share Greek [619]
nationalism, and Communist ideas and ideals seem to have left
no impression upon them. Presumably, the few who took those
ideas seriously departed with the retreating guerrilla army. For
those who remain, the vision of Sydney or Toronto means far
more than any ideological paradise.

One of the most surprising changes in Kotta is the prevalence 621
of Greek as the normal and natural speech, for communication 178x
among the villagers themselves as well as with strangers. "We 197
are all Greek now," one of the young men said, and explained
that both in the guerrilla and in the regular army, the language [669]
and sentiment had been Greek. Only the old people of the vil- [191]
lage speak Slav any more, he said. Even more to the point, the [619]

[Hill Villages]

621 × 178 [197] villagers know that they are now much better off than the people in Yugoslav Macedonia, with whom they so recently felt a degree of kinship.

[619] [631] Since 1954 no representative of the Greek government has lived in the village. An army detachment, which had been there from 1949, departed in 1954, leaving patriotic slogans on the walls of the buildings used as barracks. No gendarmes came to replace the soldiers. Hence the village has been left very largely to its own devices. The inhabitants like it that way. [651] As is true of all villages in Greece, the government no longer tries to collect direct taxes from Kotta (as it did before the war), but contents itself with a 2 per cent sales tax on products sold in town markets. This, for Kotta, amounts to paying almost no taxes at all, for the inhabitants sell almost nothing. This, too, pleases the villagers.

[727] Kotta, therefore, is a community in which thoroughly old-fashioned attitudes prevail. In spite of the harrowing guerrilla war – or rather because of it – life has resumed its old, familiar channels; and since everyone now has enough to eat without having to venture into the outside world, the villagers seem well content to settle down within their nearly self-sufficient valley and let the world go by.

621 161 × 178 [728] The real question for the future is whether or not the village will proceed once again to breed children on the reckless scale that prevailed before. The age structure of the surviving population is altogether anomalous, the removal of all children between the ages of two and fourteen in 1948 having left a great gap. Moreover, military losses and emigration overseas mainly affected young men and women of the next older age groups. The potentially childbearing population has therefore been drastically depleted, so much so that out of a total of seventy-seven families in 1956, the village contained only four or five [885] couples of childbearing age. (One must bear in mind that in a

Kotta

[Hill Villages]

community where very early marriages have been the rule, a 621
woman of thirty or thirty-five is already old.) Between 1952 161
and 1956 there were only four marriages in the village, twelve 178 x
births, sixteen deaths. Under the circumstances, it seems certain [885]
that the population will decrease still further in the immediate future.

Yet even four or five families could turn out to be quite enough to repopulate the village, if the old patterns of early marriage and numerous children prevail. Indeed, the close blood relationships of all the villagers suggests that in times past the community may well have contained only a handful of families from whom hundreds (or, counting those overseas, thousands) in due course descended. Thanks to the depopulation brought by the guerrilla war, the traditional life of Kotta has become easy once again, and if the young people accept the old ways, and do not allow the glitter of urban life overseas, reflected in the letters and money orders sent back by friends and relatives, to change their outlook, then it seems fairly certain that within a decade or less the depopulation of the village will come to a halt, and rapid growth in numbers will begin once more. If so, after something like thirty or forty years Kotta will probably be back in the impossible position of 1947.

This cycle is, I believe, the key to much Balkan history. The 175
peasant family system was adjusted, from age-old antiquity, to 161
supply large numbers of children, most of whom died from violence 669
or disease before attaining adulthood. With the more or less effective pacification of the countryside in the last couple of centuries, together with the elimination of some epidemic diseases and the control of others, this age-old balance was thrown out of kilter, so that the peasant population began (as early as the mid-eighteenth century) to run far ahead of the development of resources that might sustain it.

Kotta

[Hill Villages]

175 669 619 In politics, the result was a series of risings against the lords of the plains, which centered in the marginal hill villages. Until 1912, the lords of the Macedonian plains were of course Turks, and Greek nationalism (like other Balkan nationalisms) was therefore able with perfect propriety to combine territorial expansion with social revolution, and pit hill against plain in the name of individual freedom and national self-determination. The first clear example of this phenomenon was the Greek War of Independence of 1821–30. The long series of revolts and irregular wars of the nineteenth century in the European dominions of the Ottoman Empire continued the process; and the guerrilla movements in Yugoslavia, Albania and Greece during (and in Greece after) the second world war were only its latest manifestations. In this most recent period, however, the lords of the plains were not Turks any longer, and were not even landlords. Instead they were fellow peasants and co-nationals. The difference was cloaked during World War II by the fact that Germans and Italians were in the plains, and to attack them served to justify the far more genuine assault upon the plains villages – from which, after all, the major food supply of the guerrilla forces had to come. Only in Greece, between 1946 and 1949, did the divergence between nationalism and social revolution become clear; and even in that instance, as pointed out above, most guerrillas felt themselves to be Greek patriots as well.

621 161 433 Kotta's wartime experience shows dramatically how such warfare brought its own solution to the problem of overpopulation – cruel, blind, bloody, but effective. Depopulation, such as Kotta suffered, certainly sufficed to solve for a generation or so the problem of too many mouths and not enough land. When the crisis passed, survivors could settle back to a more or less satisfactory life again, until their growing numbers should once more make the traditional style of life impossible within the

Kotta

[Hill Villages]

limits of the hill valleys. In times past, Balkan hillsmen then had 621
to seek sustenance from the plains, either by peaceful labor or 161
by armed forays. 433

As far as Kotta and villages like it are concerned, it now seems 621
to me an open question whether the old cycle will repeat itself 161
again or whether new standards of expectation and conduct 167
will make sufficient inroads upon the traditional peasant family system to check early marriage and rapid multiplication of numbers. Through overseas emigration, the modern city has made its mark on Kotta. All but a few young people want to leave, and many have done so. At the same time, the handful who remain appear to be conforming to the old ways. Perhaps the critical turn will come as their children grow up; for if the rising generation elects to look beyond the confines of the village – and if the possibilities of migration, either within Greece or overseas, exist – then, perhaps, as the population of the village begins to press once again upon the limits of local production, the young people may decline to continue the old, economically suicidal pattern, and will instead seek their fortunes far afield, and refuse to marry into hopeless poverty at home. It depends more than anything else, perhaps, upon the degree of communication that may come to exist between the outside world and the villagers. In 1956 these contacts were limited.
Newspapers came seldom; vehicles rarely. But the village did [20]
possess a radio that brought daily news from Athens; and emigrants' letters were perhaps the most important of all the channels of contact with the great world beyond the valley in which Kotta nestles.

Survivors of the older generation – those who have lost their 621
children to the guerrillas – seem to have no doubts or reserva- 161
tions in wishing to see more and more children about again. 842
The priest complained of how empty and joyless the village was without the throngs of children he knew before. He deeply

Kotta

[Hill Villages]

621/ regretted the loss of five of his own whom the guerrillas had
161/ taken. Yet he was fortunate in having one child still with him,
842 a girl who was too young to leave her mother when the guerrillas took the older children. As for the attitudes of the younger generation in the village, I could not satisfy myself. In the presence of their elders, they generally kept quiet, and certainly refrained from any overt dissent. Whether they, too, shared the traditional view that the more children one has the better off one is (assured thereby of God's blessing and of sustenance in old age), I could not tell.

### CHERASIA

621 Cherasia is a village in Thessaly near the base of Mount
361 Pelion, some six air miles from Volos, the fourth city of Greece.
[491] Along the winding road, however, it lies about twelve miles from Volos; and before 1952 the only road connection with the village required a detour of about twenty-four miles around the
[173] mountain. The community is an old one. Local tradition holds that it was founded 680 years ago. Until the Germans destroyed
[433] the "upper" village in 1943, the community led a semi-migra-
[233] tory life, spending the summer months high up the mountain where a natural spring supplied water, and coming down to the foot of the mountain only in winter, when the flocks could pasture on the stubble of other villages' grain fields. The villagers looked upon the upper village as their real home, the lower one as only a temporary shelter.

x/178 The traditional occupations of the village were sheepherding
433 and charcoal burning. Once upon a time, sixty or seventy years
233 ago, the main support of the community may well have been
314 sheep, pastured on the rough mountain in summer, and on grain
[438] stubble in the winter. Then, by degrees, charcoal burning and woodcutting became more important. Two factors presumably

Cherasia

[Hill Villages] 314

233

led to this change. One was the rise of Volos as an important 178x
urban center, requiring charcoal as fuel for cooking and for 433
heating houses. To supply the rising demand, the villagers of [438]
Cherasia began cutting off the forests of Mount Pelion with a new energy. A second factor was the growth of population in Cherasia itself. As more families appeared, sheep could not support them all, because the pastures could not be readily extended. So the people fell back on exploitation of the forests.

This "ancient" history is mostly speculation. I was not able to get any clear account of their distant past from the men of
the village. What they did know was that in 1905 three families [423]
had secured title to 100 stremmata (25 acres) of land apiece in the little valley that spreads out below the site of their winter
quarters at the foot of the mountain. At that time, very likely, [241]
the free villagers of the mountain saw little or no attraction in the toilsome life of a farmer, and preferred to keep to their ancient shepherd's way of life, supplemented by woodcutting and charcoal burning.

About the time of the first world war, things changed. As the 178x
population continued to grow, sheep and charcoal no longer 433
sufficed to provide a satisfactory living for the members of the 241
community. Many of them began to clear little patches of rocky 423
mountainside in the hope of raising a crop or two on the land.
Their tenure was legally recognized by a governmental survey [314]
made in 1922, which assigned to each family title to the patches its members had cleared and cultivated in preceding years. During the interwar period the pressure to find supplementary means of livelihood through agriculture continued to mount. In 1938, village authorities parceled out 500 stremmata of what had been common pasture to private family ownership. No further property changes had occurred in the village up to 1956.

The brute fact remains, however, that fields cleared from mountain slopes are miserable agricultural land. These produce

Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

x 178 a crop of only about 30 okes of wheat per stremma (a little more
433 than 4 bushels per acre), and are capable of doing that only for
241 two or three years, after which time the field has to be aban-
doned for a while until its dubious fertility has been restored.
423 The president of the village told me that he allows the villagers
to clear land wherever they can find anything that seems worth
clearing, even though this goes beyond the letter of the law and
encroaches on what is properly common pasture.

x 178 The desperate effort to find more cultivable land throughout
the interwar, wartime and postwar years reflects the growing
313 exhaustion of the forests, upon which the majority of the village
314 population have come to depend. The villagers have cut off the
433 trees farther and farther up the mountain, until only a little
scrub oak remains; and even this is so thin that a man has to
work hard and long to collect enough wood to make a charcoal
[438] burning. Since World War II, indeed, it has become more usual
to sell the wood in its raw form, even though this multiplies
transport problems, and means far less money per donkey-load
delivered to Volos.

x 178 Within the village itself bitter feelings began to rise during
the interwar period. The three families that had turned to agri-
241 culture in 1905, thus securing possession of the only decent
423 agricultural land in the whole village, were able to keep their
565 farms together. In 1956, one of the three families had removed
578 entirely to Volos, and was renting out its land on a sharecrop-
ping basis to poorer families in the village. The other two "rich"
427 families (who by any standard other than that of Cherasia were
still poor) were each represented in the village by a single
household, presumably because other descendants of the origi-
nal owners had left for town. The result was a striking economic
contrast between the poor woodcutters, whose painfully cleared
hillside patches were scarcely worth the labor of cultivation,
and the "rich" families. Indeed, the members of the two village

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

178x

households owning 100 stremmata each did not find it necessary 241
to work the land themselves. Like the absentee in Volos, they 423
also rented their fields on a sharecropping basis to the others. 565
The president of the village in 1956 was the head of one of 578
these households; he had let the nail of his little finger on one
hand grow in order to prove to everyone that he was exempt 427
from manual labor. He was also the only fat man I saw in the [302]
village. [142]

The bad feeling in Cherasia was not simply a matter of economics, 178x
however. Shepherds have had a proud tradition in 233
Greece. Heavy manual labor is beneath them, and they have always 241
felt themselves superior to the grubbing farmers of the
plains. Moreover, a tradition of violence has always lain near 433
the surface among shepherds. In days not so very far past, it was 565
part of the shepherd's job to protect his flock from wolves. Even 578
today a few wolves are said to survive in remote parts of [579]
Greece; and whenever public order breaks down, far more dangerous
two-footed wolves, armed with guns, quickly appear. [461]
The transition from shepherd to bandit has always been easy.
A shepherd losing his flock must almost automatically become a
two-footed wolf himself, preying on other shepherds or, better
yet, on the fat, stolid landlords and peasants of the plain.

In view of these traditions, one can better understand the [461]
spirit of Cherasia. Free shepherds, traditionally ready for violence,
were being ground down to a status beneath that of the
weaklings who in 1905 had preferred the indignity of labor to
the leisure of mountain pastures; and to the people of Cherasia
this seemed a clear reversal of the proper social order. They
were most unwilling to accept such a reversal. They were not
farmers, and did not wish to become farmers. As a result, they
did not do all they might have done to make their hillside agriculture
rewarding. Field labor was, for them, a regrettable
necessity, not a satisfying way of life. They made no effort at 000

Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

x178 terracing, attempted no planting of fruit trees or of vines, and
233 in general refused to borrow any of the traditional and very
241 effective methods of Greek Mediterranean agriculture, even
433 though there are villages on the other side of Mount Pelion,
within less than two hours' walking distance, where these methods have been in use for centuries on land intrinsically no better than that of the Cherasia hillsides. (There is one important difference, however: because Cherasia's land faces north, toward the open Thessalian plain, cold winter winds blow across it and make olive cultivation impossible. But olive cultivation is and has always been the backbone of Mediterranean hillside agriculture. This undoubtedly is the reason why settlers from over the mountain never tried to exploit Cherasia's hillsides, leaving them to shepherds for winter pasture.)

x178 The upshot of the history and traditions of Cherasia was that
565 even before World War II, a thoroughly revolutionary mood
578 prevailed in the village. The poor – which is to say nearly
669 everybody in the village except the three families – felt the
need to find a scapegoat for what was happening to them. They
579 despised but also envied the three "rich" families, and felt that
it would no more than serve them right to be plundered of all they had gained. The villagers also held the government and all other persons in authority vaguely responsible for the straits in which they found themselves. They could not help casting greedy eyes upon rich villages like Lofiscos, which lies within sight of Cherasia, a scant twenty miles across the flat Thessalian plain. But unlike most Greek villagers, they did not really want agricultural land; plunder was more in line with the tradition of the community.

726 The Communist-led guerrilla movement of World War II
669 therefore found unusually ready and unanimous support in
Cherasia. No one was willing to tell me how many men from

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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[Hill Villages]

the village joined the resistance during the occupation period; 726
but my guess is that practically every able-bodied man took 669
part at some time or other in guerrilla actions, even though
some of the villagers remained ostensibly civilian. A conse- [727]
quence was that in 1943 a German expedition burnt all the
houses of the upper village and made it uninhabitable. The peo-
ple of Cherasia, fortunately, saw them coming and had time to
escape over the mountain.

The "liberation" of Greece in 1944 brought no liberation to 669
Cherasia. Quite the contrary, it interfered with the process by [579]
which armed men from the village had been able during the
occupation to get grain and other goods from the plains. Consequently, when three men appeared on Mount Pelion in 1946 and summoned the young men of the village to take arms again, the response was immediate. When I visited the village in 1947, a guerrilla band, some thirty strong, was encamped in the ruins of the upper village. A detachment descended each evening to gather supplies from the inhabitants of the lower village and from other villages out in the plain. Most of the members of the band were sons of families living in lower Cherasia, although the leaders of the band came from elsewhere.

During the day, the Greek army, from a strong point in a neighboring plains village, took possession of Cherasia. Each morning a patrol of soldiers came to the village and demanded to know who had been collaborating with the guerrillas; each evening the guerrillas came down from the mountain and demanded to know who had been helping the soldiers. Under the circumstances, life was difficult, to say the least. The army sometimes beat those suspected of sympathizing with the guer-
rillas. In addition, irregular rightist bands visited the commu- [727]
nity several times and indulged in greater violence, killing sev-
eral people and burning down seven houses. The guerrillas,

[Hill Villages]

669 722 [727] The guerrillas, too, burned some houses, including those belonging to the three "rich" families of the community. These had fled to Volos, together with some other families from the village. The people who remained were inclined to support the guerrillas.

About two weeks after my visit in 1947, the army evacuated all the remaining inhabitants of Cherasia to Volos. There they remained in refugee quarters for two and a half years. The last guerrilla band disappeared from Mount Pelion only in 1950, some six months after the main guerrilla army in the north had retreated across the Albanian frontier. It was therefore late in 1950 before the inhabitants of Cherasia were allowed – or compelled – to return to their village.

727 653 [657] [233] Government authorities were, however, well aware of the difficulties that confronted the community. The returned refugees were given every help to re-establish themselves. They received, gratis, 238 sheep to serve as a nucleus for their flock, as well as materials for the reconstruction of their houses, most of which had suffered damage. Officials issued seed and implements as well. A comprehensive work relief program was set up; for about two years after their return, the men of Cherasia received wages for working on projects that directly benefited their community. In this fashion the new road over the mountain was built – shortening the way to Volos by nearly half. [346] [312] Similarly, new and very handsome school and church buildings were constructed; and pipes from the spring in the upper village brought fresh water into lower Cherasia for the first time. This was vital if the population was to remain in the lower village the year around, since water had previously been unavailable there in summer. Another side of the government policy was to give no help toward reconstruction of the village of upper Cherasia – perched, as it was, high on the mountain beyond the reach of roads. No doubt the authorities in this fashion hoped to tie the villagers to the accessible lower village, and

Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

thus prevent, or at least make more difficult, any future guer- 727
rilla action based upon the upper village. 653

The result of these expenditures is clearly visible today. The village looks handsomer than ever before; the sound of flowing water resounds refreshingly beside the neatly paved square in the center of the village, and the bright new tile roofs of the village shine in the sun. Only the houses of Nea Eleftherohori rival the impressive outward appearance of Cherasia, and the public structures of Nea Eleftherohori are far inferior to the new ones of the Thessalian village.

Nor have governmental efforts ended there. An agricultural 242
extension agent visits Cherasia once or twice a month – a far
more frequent visitation than I found in any other village. He 654
attempted to establish viticulture and fruit trees in the village; 241
but the vines perished, and the fruit trees are still spindly sap-
lings, not yet bearing anything. Finally, additional water works 653
are in process of construction, on the strength of a loan from the
Ministry of Interior, issued free of interest and repayable in in- 241
stallments, starting only after five years. When this is finished, 652
there will be enough water to irrigate 50 stremmata (12½ acres)
of bottom land, and thus open up a new range of agricultural
possibilities for the village.

Certainly, no one can say that either money or skill has been 178x
stinted in trying to make the life of Cherasia tolerable for its 829
inhabitants. Yet it was perfectly apparent in 1956 that the effort
had been totally inadequate. The people of the village were 669
sullen and suspicious, and felt no gratitude toward the govern- 241
ment authorities who had done so much for them. The spirit of 433
the village seemed almost the same as in 1947, with the difference that now the rightists were again on top, and the majority saw little hope for gaining even the nighttime control their party had enjoyed in 1947. In talking with one or two of the villagers I gained the impression that they perversely hoped the

x 178 829 669 241 433

various government plans would fail. Indeed, I suspect that the vines which the agricultural extension agent planted so hopefully may have died, not because his plans were faulty, but because the villagers failed to look after them.

Aside from the fact that Communist sympathies were deeply implanted in the village even before the war and were strengthened during and after it by the guerrilla movement, one can point to two facts that help to explain the village attitude. First, the persons who stand to benefit principally from agricultural improvements are naturally those who possess good land – the three families that acquired the bottom land in 1905. For the others, on their miserable hillside patches, there is little the agricultural extension agent can do.

x 178 829 669 433 313 656

Second, and much more important, is the fact that in 1954 the government cracked down on woodcutting. Roughly half of the mountain slopes, which had been "theirs" for as long as the men of the village could remember, were set aside as a forest preserve where woodcutting was forbidden. The villagers did not stop cutting wood, but they now do it by stealth, mostly at night, and go out in parties, with watchmen posted in appropriate places to warn them when one of the forest guards comes by. Such activity smacks more than a little of warfare against constituted authority; and in proportion as the men of the village make their living in this illegal fashion, they maintain an open hostility against the government. In doing so they remain faithful to the old "freedom" of the village, characteristic of their shepherd forebears and of their guerrilla relatives and contemporaries.

Small wonder, therefore, that the villagers regard the government as hypocritical and inimical – pretending to give them something with one hand (but really giving mainly to the "rich" families) while with the other depriving them of their very livelihood. No theoretical arguments, to the effect that Greece

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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badly needs reforestation, and that in the long run everyone, including 178x
the people of Cherasia, will benefit from re-establishment 829
of real forests on Mount Pelion, carry any weight among 669
the woodcutters who feel that their rights have been ruthlessly 433
disregarded, and their traditional way of life endangered. They 313
do not care to be farmers, and for all their ragged poverty, despise 656
such slavish souls as are content to labor long and hard on
the land. [24 1]

A deep and painful irony lies in the fact that without the 669
bureaucratic paternalism of the government most of the people 722
of Cherasia would, in all probability, have died during the guerrilla 657
war. What happened in Kotta, where the arm of the government 178x
did not reach, might well have happened also in
Cherasia, if the inhabitants of the village had not been evacuated to Volos in 1947 and fed there – however miserably – for two and a half years by government relief. And if the population of the village had shrunk to one third of what it actually was in 1956, then it does not seem improbable that much of the present bitterness would have dissolved, because then something like the free traditional way of life would have been possible again. Governmental intervention between 1947 and 1950 prevented the operation of the brutal old-fashioned remedy for overpopulation; but governmental intervention since 1950 has not yet sufficed (and seems unlikely to suffice in the future) to provide a tolerable life for the population that has so successfully been preserved from famine, disease and violent death.

The official records of Cherasia were in considerable confusion 217
in 1956, and I was not able to secure satisfactory figures on 166
the present and past population of the village. The main reason 727
for this state of affairs is that many families are registered as inhabitants of Cherasia, but do not reside there. When the villagers were sent back to their homes, everyone was supposed to go, and officially everyone did. Actually, about twenty-five

[Hill Villages]

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166
[727]
families managed to escape official pressures and stayed in Volos, I was told, even though the records showed them back in the village. Similarly, a trickle of migration from the village into Volos since 1950 has gone unrecorded. With every sort of bureaucratic obstacle put in the way of legal transfer of residence from Cherasia to Volos, most of those who depart from the village simply neglect red tape and leave their names registered in Cherasia. [745] They do so not by choice, since people officially registered as living in a village like Cherasia cannot claim unemployment benefits in Volos, and if they find no work, must either starve, rely upon relatives, or return to their village until better times offer a new start in town. This, of course, is the main reason why transfer of residence is made so difficult; the government could not afford to pay unemployment benefits to all the hungry men from the hills who might swarm into town if they could secure such payments.

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[432]
Nevertheless, the villagers all agreed that more people were living in Cherasia in 1956 than had lived there before the war. A mean between conflicting estimates of the population came out close to 500 for 1956, and about 430 for 1940. The villagers reckon that their own local production supplies food for only two months in the year. The rest has to be bought with money earned by selling wood and charcoal, together with an occasional lamb from their flock.

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[743]
[844]
Records of births and deaths were also in confusion, partly because children born in Volos to parents registered in Cherasia are supposed to be, but are not always in fact, entered in the village records. Partly, too, confusion arises from the custom of sending pregnant women to the Volos hospitals to give birth – a new departure in village custom, resulting from the wartime experience of living in the town, and facilitated by the existence of the new road. These children, too, sometimes escape the village registers, or are entered late. For what the figures may be

Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

162

worth, however, the records showed 45 births since 1951 as 217
against 18 deaths, and everything I heard and observed in the 621
village pointed to a very high rate of natural increase.

Marriages occur early. When nearly everyone lacks land that 178×
is worth much of anything, there is no tendency to wait until 582
the new family can be assured a landed inheritance. One young [583]
man said, somewhat cynically: "What I had when I married was a donkey, an axe and a strong back. I still have all three, and three children as well." The donkey, I gathered, was his wife's contribution to the new household; the axe and the back, his own. This, it seems, is more or less normal in the village; and one can easily understand how a desire to escape the nagging poverty of the parental household would lead young men and girls into early marriage, in order at least to enjoy personal independence and the satisfactions of the marriage bed. Even though the rest of their traditional style of life seems on the verge of ruin, this still is possible. Feeling a general despair of ever being able to live decently, feeling also a certain reckless defiance of all forms of authority – including parental authority – there seems to persons such as the young man who spoke to me no reason not to marry as soon as one can find a partner.

In spite of the rebellious mood prevailing in Cherasia, the 621
officials of the village in 1956, although supposedly elected, 666
represented the extreme right. The president and secretary 669
were both members of the "rich" families, possessing compara- 565
tively broad acres, and both were very emphatic and voluble in asserting that the only way to deal with Communists was to 578
use force. Indeed, they said that peace could come to Cherasia and to Greece only when Russia was blown up by American atom bombs. How they were elected, I do not know, but I am certain the election was not a free one. Suspicion and thinly veiled hostility dominated the relation between the villagers and their official leaders.

Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

621 669 727 Ten men in the village had come back after serving with the guerrillas, and were kept under informal surveillance. Some forty others had not returned, and most of these were presumed dead. Thirteen who had retreated behind the iron curtain in 1949 had, however, sent letters to their relatives. The village president, who provided these statistics, was obviously well informed on these matters and clearly believed that a major part of his duties was to keep a close watch upon leftists or suspected leftists.

166 621 433 [669] Here, then, is a village scarcely better off than it was in 1947. In spite of the expenditure of tens of thousands of dollars, derived indirectly from American aid – indeed, *because* of such expenditure – the acute and untenable overcrowding of very poor land continues; and with it the political tensions of 1946–49 seethe, just beneath the surface. The only solution for Cherasia which seems to make any sense is to remove two thirds or more of the present population, and find land or work for them elsewhere. This has not been attempted; official policy has done just the opposite by placing barriers in the way of migration from the community.

[464] Unfortunately, Volos, the natural outlet for the surplus population of Cherasia, was itself undergoing a first-class economic crisis in 1956.[4] The port, which is the economic heart of the

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[731] [653] [288] [4] An earthquake which damaged many buildings in Volos rather badly in 1954 was, under the circumstances, a perverse blessing to many of the poorer families of the town. Repair and reconstruction got under way quickly, thanks to a special grant from the national budget (and assisted by a special American aid appropriation of $7 million for the purpose). This gave temporary work to many, but by 1956 this extraordinary source of employment had dwindled. At the same time, a large textile plant in the city went on part time, and discharged a large proportion of its working force, as a result of a general crisis in the Greek textile trade. Consequently, Volos was, like Cherasia, unusually clean and tidy in 1956, and unusually depressed.

Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

city, was almost idle, so that serious unemployment was endemic 166
in Volos, thus effectively blocking the easiest and most 621
immediate escape for the hillsmen of Cherasia. In the Thessalian 433
plain, villages like Lofiscos have not developed their agriculture 464
to a level of intensity that would offer seasonal employment
on a significant scale. Hence, for the time being the people
of Cherasia are caught in a net scarcely of their own devising.
At the same time they are stubbornly and angrily doing little
or nothing to help themselves. It is not a hopeful situation, and [669]
if the general political climate of Greece should change, another
guerrilla band could very likely be recruited from Cherasia
without difficulty and at a moment's notice.

### KARDAMILI

Kardamili lies on the sea, and can thus be described as a hill 621
village only by looking inland, where high and barren hillsides [361]
rise abruptly from the coast, with only a small stream and a [133]
miniature delta to explain the location of the community. It is
situated on the west coast of the central peninsula of the southern
Peloponnese. Just to the south lies the wild and desolate
country of Mani, a region where tribal organization and blood
feud lasted into the twentieth century.

Kardamili raises a little wheat in the stream delta, but its 621
major crop is olives. The rocky hillsides are covered with trees, 433
skillfully planted in crevices and pockets of soil, many of which
have been created artificially by terracing. The villagers reckon [241]
that they produce enough wheat to supply the community for [438]
about four months in the year; the rest has to be imported with
money gained through the sale of olive oil.

Before the war, Kardamili added to its strictly agricultural [366]
resources by acting as a commercial center for a number of inland [438]
villages. They, too, exported olive oil, together with a few [491]

Kardamili

[Hill Villages]

621

433 animals; and before roads were built, these villages brought
366 their surplus on donkey-back (or on the hoof) to Kardamili,
438 where it was put on board a small ship, and carried either to
Athens or to Kalamata, the local metropolis, some thirty-five
491 miles away on the rich Messenian plain. In addition, an oil-
258 pressing plant was constructed in 1929 in Kardamili which em-
464 ployed as many as a hundred persons at the height of the sea-
son. Even when there were no olives to press, the plant kept
388 open the year around by making soap and other products.

This was the basis upon which about 750 people were able to make a living in the village before the war. In recent years, however, the village has not prospered. The oil factory closed
258 down permanently in 1940, depriving the village of what had
been one of its most important resources. After the war, a new
491 road, built in 1949–50, destroyed the importance of the port.
438 Instead of bringing their olives to Kardamili on donkey-back
and selling them there, the peasants of the hinterland loaded their produce directly onto trucks bound for Kalamata or Athens.

The new system was an obvious improvement on older methods of transport and marketing; but it meant that Kardamili, which for a few years between the wars had struggled toward becoming a miniature town, was compelled to sink back to a
621 purely village status. One manifestation of this change is a de-
669 crease in population. In 1940, the village had about 750 inhabit-
ants; in 1956 the population totaled only 512. War losses were
722 insignificant, although guerrillas did kill two persons from the
161 village. The whole community was forcibly evacuated to Kala-
162 mata in 1949 to prevent its exploitation by guerrilla bands that
ranged even this far south. The evacuation was perhaps scarcely justified, however, since the guerrillas never again came near, and when the villagers returned in 1950 they found their houses intact.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Kardamili

[Hill Villages]

They came back to a village whose earlier means of liveli- 621
hood was being undermined by new roads. As this fact became 166
clear, emigration from the village commenced. Altogether, 464
something like two hundred persons left the village between 433
1950 and 1956. Only one family went overseas, to Australia. The [161]
rest went either to Kalamata or to Athens. Among those who
have remained in the village, a considerable number have un- [167]
dertaken seasonal migration to the Messenian plain in order to
seek work with which to supplement the meager income from
their olive trees in the village. The biggest single source of em- [243]
ployment which has opened up in recent years is work in rice
fields, developed in former salt marshes on the very edge of the [311]
Messenian plain. For the villagers of Kardamili these fields in
Messenia have meant work and wages. Between eighty and
ninety persons, both men and women, leave the village each
year to help cultivate the rice fields. While working, they live [342]
in shanties or even out of doors, and return to their homes in
Kardamili when work stops, or when something needs to be
done on their own land.

Within the village there are variations in wealth, but no fam- 621
ily has so much land as to need to hire labor. Indeed, the village 241
secretary told me that the richest man in the village has only 429
forty days' work a year on his olive trees, while nearly one third
of all the village families own no land at all. [556]

The only change that has come to the traditional agriculture 178x
of the community is the introduction of fertilizer, but few fam- 245
ilies use it. A common opinion holds that fertilizer is bad for the
olive trees, and makes them short-lived by forcing an unnatural [241]
proliferation of fruit. A more sophisticated farmer told me that
while the size of the fruit is increased by fertilizer, the quantity
of oil is not increased in anything like the same proportion and
its quality is lowered. Since the olive trees of this part of Greece
are famous for the high quality of the oil they produce, which [438]

Kardamili

[Hill Villages]

x 178 commands a premium price in Athens and elsewhere, the use
245 of fertilizer becomes a somewhat dubious economic advantage.

[438] The fact is, I believe, that the age-old adjustment of traditional peasant agriculture in the olive-growing regions of Greece is very nearly perfect. Certainly every scrap of potential soil is used in Kardamili, and the peasants know very well how to care for their trees. Except for chemical sprays that discourage a number of insect pests damaging to the crop, scientific agriculture has not yet devised any very important improvement upon traditional peasant methods of olive culture. But sprays were known in Kardamili before the war, and their use was resumed as soon as the chemicals became available.

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[652] In 1956 the village launched a project for bringing water down the mountain. An interest-free government loan made the enterprise possible; but, even when completed, the water pipes will not supply more than household needs, leaving a little over, perhaps, for watering gardens. Shortage of water has been the long-standing problem of the community. There was scarcely enough to drink when I was there, and each glassful was treated as something precious, since the women of the village had to carry it in jars from a trickling spring half a mile away.

x 178
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873 Yet in spite of the stability of agricultural methods, the social system of the village, to all appearances, is beginning to change, more or less as the social system of Nea Eleftherohori is changing. For one thing, the villagers have begun to place great hopes in education, seeing in it a means of escaping from the land. Fifteen boys from the village were enrolled in the gymnasium in Kalamata in 1956, a quite considerable number in view of the fact that they had to live away from home, and thus had to meet expenses far greater than those confronting the boys from Nea Eleftherohori. In Kardamili itself, there is a school that teaches the first two years of the standard four-year gymnasium course. This school had eighty students, five more than

Kardamili

[Hill Villages]

were enrolled in the village primary school because boys from 178ˣ
neighboring villages were in attendance. Within Kardamili, I 621
was told, almost every boy goes through the first two years of 873
gymnasium. Even without the final two years in Kalamata there
is a chance, though not a good one, of finding a clerical job
somewhere outside.

The other aspect of the adjustment characteristic of Nea 178ˣ
Eleftherohori — postponement of marriage through the dowry 582
system — is less advanced in Kardamili, but seems to be coming
in. Dowries are rising, I was told, and even a man who owns no 583
land himself may now ask a wife to bring him 2,000 okes of olive
oil — the equivalent of several hundred dollars. This is a far cry
from the huge sums expected in Nea Eleftherohori by a young
man who is to inherit land; but what is significant is that before
the war such demands were not being made in Kardamili. In
those days a landless man would expect no more than a nominal
dowry.

Village statistics did not show very convincingly any decrease 621
in the birth rate, however. The decrease in numbers born no 161
more than corresponded to the decline in the village population.
Moreover, the decrease in deaths was more rapid than any [744]
change in the number of births — owing, mainly, to the elimination
of malaria — so that the rate of natural increase of the population
had actually risen between 1947 and 1956. So far, it
would appear, the villagers have not felt it necessary to change
their family customs very profoundly. Migration, facilitated by
education, has sufficed to relieve intolerable conditions. The [582]
more drastic step of postponing marriage has not become generally
necessary.

In poor villages deeper into Mani, these processes have gone 178ˣ
much further. In one that I visited only briefly, Yerolimini, I 166
was told that "no" young men are left in the village: all have
gone to seek their fortunes in Piraeus, where this village has 369

x 178 established a sort of colony of its own. Girls have been left be-
166 hind, to pine as old maids, or else to marry some boy from one
[369] of the even poorer villages high in the hills – boys who are pre-
[427] pared to come down and cultivate the olive trees belonging to
the families of the absent young men in return for a share of
the crop.

647 One of the grievances that other Greeks have against the
Maniotes (as people from Mani are called), and against the
Peloponnesians in general, is that they dominate the civil serv-
ice of the country. There is some truth in this complaint. The
[665] population of these parts has never quarreled with the powers
[186] that be; the people are nearly all royalist and conservative. And
they cultivate, to a degree remarkable even among the Greeks,
a clannishness which leads them to help one another as against
[625] natives of other parts of Greece. The gendarmerie, for example,
is recruited in disproportionate part from among Maniotes, and
the same is true of several other branches of the governmental
service. It is, therefore, a bit easier for a person from this sec-
tion to g[illegible] a government job than it would be for a man from
another part of the country. Villages like Yerolimini make the
most of this fact. It looks as though Kardamili, a bit belatedly,
is attempting to do the same. But one cannot help wondering
what will happen when the graduates of Kardamili and Nea
Eleftherohori and of hundreds of similar villages begin to com-
pete for positions in the government. There can hardly be room
for them all.

x 178 If these six villages were well chosen, if their reactions to the
433 difficulties of the last few years in Greece represent widespread
phenomena and not merely local idiosyncracies, then it seems
clear that neither American nor Greek official policy has been
able to do much to solve the problems of the hill villages. If a
peaceable solution is to come, it seems probable that it will

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come by indirection: that is, by opening opportunities for work in the plains and in the towns even more rapidly than the hill populations increase their numbers. If emigration from the hills reaches a sufficient magnitude, there is a chance that standards of life and expectation derived from urban milieux will penetrate into the hills themselves, and lead the peasants there to change their customs and to regulate their reproduction to an economic standard. But until a lively possibility of attaining or defending such a standard of living begins to open, one cannot expect the hillsmen to abandon old customs which have been deeply bred into them from earliest childhood. In other words, only when self-discipline, parsimony, effort and foresight seem to promise a definitely better life than anything these people now know can changes be expected in the old-fashioned family customs. The difficulty is that the old-fashioned, rough-and-ready — one is tempted to say the natural or automatic — demographic balance has been upset by the comparative efficiency of modern government, and by medical science. Until compensatory adjustments in birth rates have occurred, the result is to create a serious and potentially explosive problem.

It is possible to imagine a time, some twenty or thirty years from now, when a more or less regular pattern of internal migration may establish itself in Greece. Perhaps some day young men from the hills, descending to the plain, may begin as day laborers and in time acquire land, by marriage or by purchase, while the plains villagers restrict their reproduction and send increasing numbers of their sons into town to pursue service or industrial occupations. Or perhaps the more mobile hillsmen may shortcut such a process, and send their sons directly into town occupations, largely bypassing the plains villages as an outlet for their numbers. But as yet only the rudiments of any such migratory pattern can be detected. There still remain, at every level, far too many men who are looking for work or for

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more work; and only the unusually lucky or energetic can clear the barriers between the paternal village and a wider, freer, more satisfying career elsewhere.

The future of Greece might well be thought of as a race between the natural increase of the hill villages and the capacity of plain and town to absorb men into new productive occupations. The future development of the towns and cities will obviously play a major role in deciding how the race comes out. Accordingly, the next chapter will be devoted to some remarks about conditions in the towns.

[pp. 147-175 not processed]

[P. 176]

## CHAPTER 5

# PUBLIC LIFE

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### *Public Administration*

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A leading official of the American economic mission in Greece said to me, when I asked about the efficiency of Greek administration: "We got absolutely nowhere trying to improve the civil service. It's the same as ever; but then, if all those people were not drawing government salaries, they would be on relief, so perhaps it doesn't make very much difference." The young man had been in Greece for a little more than a year, and during that time it was perhaps true that no very perceptible changes had come to the Greek administrative machine. Over a longer pe-

riod, however, important changes have taken place. In particular, a group of comparatively youthful economists and statisticians have risen to key posts in many of the ministries, and are able to advise their superiors in the light of a type of professional training and in accordance with intellectual concepts which ten years ago were noticeably absent from the policymaking levels of the Greek civil service. Even if the execution of official policy is not always effective, ideas of what government ought to do and can do and how to go about doing it have undergone radical change. 647 178

Politicians and civil servants of the immediate postwar period in Greece grew up in a time when society and the economy were expected to run themselves, subject only to sporadic official interference. The painful inadequacy of this outlook became apparent in 1947, when the emergency relief and reconstruction undertaken by UNRRA began to taper off before the economy had been restored to running order. In this situation, the Greek government lacked ideas as much as the means with which to try to cope with the problems confronting the country. All too clearly, automatic restoration to something like the prewar social and economic pattern was out of the question. Planning and massive organization of effort by government agencies were still needed if serious collapse was to be avoided. 647 178 433 177

The American aid mission, to be sure, stepped into the gap created by the withdrawal of the British and of UNRRA, and attempted far more energetically than its predecessors to educate Greek administrative personnel to new ways of thinking. Even before 1947, foreigners – mostly American and British – had insisted on making plans for the development of the Greek economy, and a small number of Greeks had been drawn into the attempt. Yet by and large, it was the foreigners who made plans, and the Greeks were consulted afterward. This remained more or less the case until 1950 or 1951; but in propor-

647 tion as the Americans reduced the scale of their economic aid
177 after 1952 and withdrew from detailed supervision of the minis-
[433 tries, the task of making plans was transferred to Greek hands.

178] Some senior Greek civil servants, veterans from 1945 and 1946, welcomed the new scope and authority thus entrusted to them; but in the main the men who inherited the new role were not the same persons who ten or even five years before had occupied leading positions in the Greek civil service. Between 1947 and 1952, when American advisers were introduced into nearly all Greek ministries, these impatient foreigners were able to play a major part in determining promotions and key personnel assignments within the ministries. Many a young American economist found himself at first dealing with men much older than himself, men whose ideas often had little relation to those he had imbibed during graduate training in some American university. This regularly led to serious friction, for senior Greek officials were not much inclined to go to school to cocksure youths scarcely more than half their own age. But bright young men could be found in the lower ranks of the civil service who either already shared the concepts of their American counterparts or quickly acquired some familiarity with them. Many such men were sent to the United States for additional technical training, or visited Washington to observe American administrative methods at first hand.

These persons naturally seemed to the Americans to be just the type to run things; and the voice of an American adviser was sufficiently powerful to secure rapid advancement for men he favored. In this fashion a new generation of officials came rapidly to the fore within the Greek ministries, while many of their former superiors were shunted off to unimportant posts or else retired.

647 By 1956, therefore, the economic ministries of the Greek civil
433 service were sprinkled with men of a quite new type, some-
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times of high ability and energy, many of them well at home 647
in the language of post-Keynesian economics. A national statis- 433
tical service was organized to provide them with data for their 178
calculations; and innumerable plans and surveys were made, priorities agreed upon, and projects for future expansion worked out in varying degrees of detail.

Two aims dominated most of the planning of these men. One was to improve the country's balance of payments, partly by producing goods domestically that had hitherto been imported, and partly by developing new exports (especially minerals) or enlarging old ones. The second general aim was to expand employment. Military considerations figured only indirectly in their calculations, and helping political and personal friends or [661] penalizing opponents played almost no role at all. This was a great departure, for in the prewar years, whatever economic planning the Greek government had undertaken was heavily colored by these calculations, and paid little attention to broader aims which were assumed to be beyond deliberate manipulation.

Conversations with representatives of this rising group of civil servants gave me the impression that they were more buoyantly optimistic about the future of Greece than the American economists in the aid mission. Greek economic planners were not much inclined to worry about inflation and disbalanced government budgets: they wanted to see new dams, irrigation canals, factories and mines, and felt that if inflation was the easiest way to finance the internal costs of such construction, then inflation was preferable to standing still and waiting until private savings or a government surplus was on hand to pay for the new investment. I also gained the impression that they felt themselves embarked upon a new adventure: striving for conscious management of the direction and pace of economic growth on a nation-wide basis. Moreover, they found

647 the game of manipulating the levers from behind the scenes a
433 fascinating and entirely absorbing enterprise – advising minis-
178 ters, talking back to the Americans, and, as they hoped, saving
their country from age-old poverty and hopelessness.

Whether their optimism was well founded, and whether or not the priorities the Greeks have decided upon are the best, seem to me a good deal less important than the fact that such a spirit was abroad at all. Mistakes have been made, and will almost surely be made in the future; but the great mistake which paralyzed the government of Greece in the first postwar years – the mistake of not knowing what to do, of having no policy but one of inaction, of waiting for things to pick up by themselves – this mistake at least will not be made as long as the new generation of civil servants remains as a leaven in the economic ministries, and ministers accept their advice. This is a great change from 1945 or 1946, one for which the American economic mission can take a major share of the credit.

647 The transformation of the upper ranges of the bureaucracy
178 in the central ministries in Athens was only faintly reflected in
the lower ranks in 1956. In general, a petty official sitting behind his desk continued to exhibit a displeasing servility toward his superiors (at least to their faces) and a corresponding hauteur in dealing with mere members of the public. The besetting weakness of Greek administration has been the unwillingness of superiors to delegate much responsibility to their subordinates, and this feature seemed as strong as ever. Busywork, created by passing papers over a long series of desks for approval or initialing, up and again down the hierarchy of rank, was a feature of many government offices, so much so that it was hard not to believe that official routings had been designed to keep a lot of people occupied rather than to get decisions made. It was this feature of Greek administration that the

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American economist of the aid mission had in mind when he 178
declared that nothing had changed in the civil service.

In dealing with the public, Greek civil servants often gave a 647
most unfavorable impression. Aside from the airs they assumed
as representatives of authority and power, they frequently 661
seemed not in the least concerned to help an individual solve a problem or attain something to which he was legally entitled. Instead, petty details of paper work – making application with all the correct verbiage on sheets of paper of the right size for easy filing, and so on – these were what seemed to matter; and I felt, more than once, that when an official found some flaw in the papers submitted to him, he took a certain pleasure in rejecting them and ordering the applicant to return some other time with the red tape properly tinted.

Correctness in details of this sort did, of course, assist in making clerical routine easy, but this was not, I feel sure, the compelling motive. Rather, insistence upon jots and tittles protected a subordinate from criticism by his superior, and at the same time gave him a satisfying sense of his own power as against the public.

On the other hand, when an important man – that is, some- 647
one with connections higher up – came along, he claimed and 662
received very special treatment. He was privileged to follow his papers into the inner sanctums of senior officials, thus making sure that prompt action was taken on them. Obstacles were smoothed over and procedural rules were sometimes suspended
for a man with influential friends. Foreigners often, though not [609]
always, were given the same sort of red-carpet treatment, and were accorded privileges and deference withheld from ordinary Greeks.

When a private person had business with a government agency, he would first try to find someone who knew someone

647 in the office concerned, in order to open a door for prompt and
662 courteous service by means of private communication. As a result, a comparatively small number of persons whose social position or family connections gave them an inside track enjoyed a great advantage in dealings with officialdom, while the poor and friendless could hardly regard the government machine as anything but an obstacle between themselves and their legal rights.

647 The idea that officials should be public servants rather than
661 public masters has never been firmly rooted in modern Greece. Byzantine and Turkish tradition, transformed according to Bavarian and then German models, shaped the civil service; and the fact that educated persons regard themselves as elevated far above their ignorant fellows has reinforced and perpetuated the old dichotomy between official and subject.

647 It must be said that the fault has not lain entirely with the
661 civil servants. The ordinary private citizen in Greece is prone
662 to look upon the government as his natural enemy – a group of men who are out to tax him and interfere with what he wants to do. It follows that almost any device to foil the agents of the government is considered legitimate – deceit, lying, bribery or just the exertion of "influence." Indeed, almost all Greeks entertain a kind of admiration for a man who is clever or bold or lucky enough to get around the law and the bureaucracy. Sense of duty to public authorities and laws has never been very strong in the country. More than most nations, the Greeks remain anarchists and individualists at heart; and rather high-handed methods, together with rigid punctiliousness in matters of red tape, is a natural and perhaps almost inevitable official response to such public attitudes.

647 A few segments of the bureaucracy, however, were making
663 serious efforts to serve the public. The most conspicuous of
177 these were the agricultural extension agents, whose contacts
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with the farmers seemed to be genuinely friendly and highly 647
effective in nearly all of the villages I visited. Here again, the 663
American aid mission was entitled to a great deal of credit, for [177]
American advisers had made special efforts to reorganize the [654]
agricultural extension service on the model of the county
agricultural agents in the United States. Many of the Greek agriculturalists
had been sent to study in America before receiving
their appointments. The public health agencies were another [657]
branch of the central administration in which a spirit of service
had come to prevail; and there may have been others. In general,
it was the older departments of the government, and particularly
those concerned with money and taxes, in which the
unpleasant but traditional attitudes were most firmly and universally
established.

Another administrative change, and one which produced 178
highly beneficial results in some localities at least, was the reinvigoration 631
of local government. During the war and after- 621
ward, until 1951, local government officials were appointed 621
through the Ministry of Interior. In 1951, however, local elec- 647
tions were organized, partly at least in response to repeated 666
urging from Americans. As a result of these elections, village
presidents and city mayors, together with advisory councils
which assisted them in their administration, became more
nearly independent of the central government, and commanded,
presumably, more local confidence and support than
was likely to be the case when the offices were filled by appointment
from above.

The system did not always work smoothly – witness Che- 621
rasia; but my impression of the local officials whom I met in 631
1956 was on the whole a quite favorable one. Except in Che- 178
rasia, the village presidents seemed to have the full confidence
of the villagers, and some of them were men of real intelligence
and force of character. The president of Old Corinth would be

621 a distinguished man in any company. Authority seemed to rest
631 as naturally upon his shoulders as the callouses rested upon
178 his palms. This easy relation between village officers and the
people of their community had definitely not been characteristic in 1947.

621 Local government in Greece was suffering, however, from a
631 chronic and serious handicap. Local authorities lacked funds,
652 and could seldom do anything beyond routine administration
without borrowing from some agency of the central government.[1] The result of this situation was to extend greatly the real authority and influence of the central government over local affairs. Village and municipal authorities spent a great deal of time waiting in the anterooms of officials of the central government in the hope of securing money with which to carry through some local improvement.

621 Villages had always depended on the Agricultural Bank or
651 on one of the central ministries for finding money for any im-
652 portant project; cities and towns until 1949 had financed their
local expenditures mainly through excise duties imposed upon
178 goods brought into the municipality. Before that year, long
631 lines of peasant carts, waiting their turn at municipal excise
stations, were a frequent sight in the outskirts of every town. Internal tariffs were abolished in 1949, however, and the share of the cigarette tax, levied nationally, which was assigned to municipalities in lieu of these excises proved generally inadequate. Town governments were therefore in poor shape financially, and any public improvements that were made came from special grants or loans from the central government.

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[633] [1] The municipality of Athens, for example, had been insolvent for as long as anyone cared to recall. The problem was such that in 1955 and
[365] again in 1956, the Athens Power Company threatened to cut off the supply of electricity to municipal institutions unless some of the back bills were paid.

### *The Political Cosmos*

However real the changes which had come in the senior 645
ranks of the civil service and in local government, it remained 646
true that plans for economic development and for most local 433
improvements depended ultimately upon cabinet ministers who 663
held office as politicians and not as economic or any other sort of technicians. Cabinet ministers in turn held their high positions at the pleasure of parliamentary deputies, whose votes depended partly on party affiliations, partly on personal ambition, and partly on calculations of the state of opinion among the electorate.

As in other countries where a managerial bureaucracy does 666
not enjoy unchallenged control of the governmental machine, 433
the issues that have most excited the politicians and the public 663
in Greece have not been questions of economic policy and priority. Everyone is in favor of economic development, everyone is against inflation; everyone is in favor of better salaries and pensions, and everyone is against an unbalanced budget. In other words, political debate is not carried on in responsible economic terms, and a government in office always finds it impossible to live up to wild promises its leaders made in campaign speeches.

This sort of irresponsibility is by no means peculiar to Greece. 665
Most politicians in democratic countries, not least in the United [563]
States, behave very similarly. What lends the Greek political [619]
world its peculiar character is the nature of the political parties [648]
and the irredentist tradition of Greek nationalism.

Political parties in Greece (with the exception of the Communist party) formed in the past around the person of a political leader rather than around a program or around local political machines. The system worked effectively only when an unusually gifted individual appeared on the scene, who, by the

665 magnetism of his personality, was able to control his followers
and keep them faithful to him. Eleftherios Venizelos was able
to exert such leadership during parts of his career, though even
he was not always successful. General Papagos achieved some-
thing similar during the first year or so when he held office, be-
fore his failing health raised the question of the succession and
induced his followers to start jockeying for position.

645 When no single commanding figure was able to dominate the
662 political scene – and this was normal – then political life be-
came a complicated intrigue among ambitious individuals.
Every cabinet spent a lot of energy smoothing over personal
frictions within its own ranks, and attempting to block schemes,
originating from the outside, to disrupt its following in the
Chamber of Deputies. In many instances, these preoccupations
[433] prevented the cabinet from paying more than casual attention
to the really important issues confronting Greece: questions of
[663] economic policy, in particular, were often neglected, and awk-
ward decisions, bound to disappoint powerful individuals, were
sometimes put off indefinitely.

665 The introduction of the majority system of election in 1952
was conceived, both by its Greek advocates and by the United
666 States Embassy, as a promising remedy for this situation. The
645 effect of the new electoral law was to compel separate personal
[177] parties to form election coalitions, since without a coalition no
party could hope for a majority if any two others joined forces.
But the coalitions did not really destroy the personal parties.
Instead, the leaders forming a coalition bargained together to
decide how many personal supporters each would be allowed
to insert in the coalition's slate of candidates. Questions of the
apportionment of cabinet positions and other honorific appoint-
ments, to be awarded in the event of victory, were also explored
if not always settled in advance. To be sure, Papagos resisted
this process and made few promises to the politicians who

joined his Rally; yet even he, when it came to appointing his 665
cabinet, rewarded the most conspicuous leaders of personal 666
parties who had merged their following into his, by appoint- 645
ing them to ministerial positions.

By 1956, when the commanding personality of General Papagos had been removed from the scene, the actual differences made by the new electoral law were a good deal less marked than might at first appear. Under the old proportional electoral system, the critical negotiations to form a cabinet occurred after the elections; under the new majority system very similar negotiations preceded the elections. In either case, personal followings gathered around a specially conspicuous individual were the basic elements from which cabinets and coalitions were built. Even these building blocks of the political edifice were not very firm; a leader might find, almost overnight, that "his" followers had gone off after someone else who seemed to promise something new or different.

How a man became a party leader was hard to say. Very 665
diverse personalities were active in Greek politics, and some 645
party leaders seemed, at least from the outside, to have little 662
personal impressiveness. Inheritance was a factor in some cases. Sophocles Venizelos, for example, had made his political career on the strength of his father's name, and on little else. Men who lacked such an advantage normally established leadership by oratory in the Chamber of Deputies and through newspaper publicity.

As the game of politics was played, the opposition regularly enjoyed certain advantages. This implied a degree of instability for any government. First of all, in any distribution of ministerial seats and other plums of office, more contenders were bound to be left out than could possibly be included. Efforts to solve this difficulty by enlarging the size of the cabinet have been made from time to time, but always at the cost of effi-

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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665 645 662 ciency, since the more voices that have to reach agreement upon any policy, the more difficult it is to decide anything. Hence the size of Greek cabinets has fluctuated very markedly since World War II, from over twenty-five to less than fifteen members. But even when a cabinet was made unwieldy by the effort to include as many potential supporters as possible, there were always more disappointed than successful candidates; and to such discontented persons it was a standing temptation to break party lines and vote the government down in the Chamber of Deputies on any convenient issue. In the ensuing cabinet reshuffle they might always hope to do better, having proved their indispensability to the government by unseating it.

665 666 Second, the opposition was always in the position of being able to criticize without suggesting specific and practicable alternatives. It was easy to denounce half measures, to attack policies limited by the availability of money or of physical resources, to criticize the gaps between promises and actual achievements. The fact that much of what was thus attacked could not have been done much differently by anyone in power made little difference, since the opposition was not seriously concerned with what could or could not be done. Most politicians out of office were inclined to feel that any stick with which to beat the government, even a rotten one, was better than silence, so long as the stick hurt.

[663] The irrelevance of much of the language of political debate to the real, underlying problems of Greek society was easy to criticize from the outside. Yet a sober technical discussion of what the government could and should accomplish, of relative priority among the many desirable projects, and of long-range policies calculated to relieve overpopulation and underemployment lacked all political appeal.

471 457 648 663 The difficulty was that Greece faced a formidable political-psychological problem. If large-scale investment on the basis

of local resources were to occur, then restriction of current con- 471
sumption would be necessary. Money and goods would have to 457
be diverted from consumption to capital construction. Without 648
such diversion, the country was condemned to chronic poverty, 663
unless foreign investment and financing came to the rescue. Up to 1956 Greece had indeed depended upon foreign investment for its capital development; but the United States Congress could scarcely be counted upon to continue its support indefinitely. *In fact, between 1954 and 1956 it became clear that* American aid to Greece was to be shaped by more narrowly conceived American interests, which would mean that military subsidy and the disposal of surplus American agricultural products would take precedence over industrial or any other sort of capital investment in Greece. Moreover, a Greek government that depended upon American bounty would necessarily surrender a large portion of its effective sovereignty, as happened between 1947 and 1952. Such a policy would expose Greek authorities to charges of acting as craven "yes men" to the Americans, and of betraying Greek national interests, as, for instance, in Cyprus.

Dependence upon foreign funds to finance capital develop- 471
ment was therefore a poor substitute for financing such devel- 511
opment from local resources. Yet no one in Greece wanted to 652
reduce and few wished to restrict the standard of living. The 663
general public was impatient of austerity and wanted an immediate and miraculous increase in consumption levels. The chronic disbalance of the governmental budget reflected (among other factors) the pressure of these demands – demands for higher pensions and salaries, for better unemployment, medical and old-age benefits, and the like. To offer present hardship in the hope of future amelioration of economic conditions was therefore politically unthinkable, even though this was the only program that could really cope with the prob-

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471 lems Greece confronted. Inflating the currency to pay current
511 running expenses and to finance a modest program of govern-
652 ment capital investment proved far more palatable politically,
even though such a policy penalized the salaried and wage-
[458] earning classes, and led to recurrent crises as the price level
outran their incomes.

433 Greece shares this problem with other underdeveloped na-
511 tions in which population growth tends to equal or outstrip
increases in productivity, while at the same time superficial
663 contact with modern economic ideas has convinced leaders of
public opinion that poverty is neither inevitable nor necessary,
but can and should be relieved by government action. Under
these circumstances, the processes of parliamentary government
are most unlikely to turn up politicians who dare to contradict
the immediate desire of the electorate for an improvement of
living standards. Political irresponsibility toward fundamental
economic problems, of a type so widespread in Greece, is a
normal and all but inevitable result.

647 To 1956, at least, the discrepancy between the tenor of politi-
177 cal debate and the planning of technicians in the economic
ministries of the Greek government seems to have had only
433 slight effect upon the practical realization of economic plans. In
645 some cases, the fact that the minister was so often distracted by
663 the exigencies of the political game may even have given civil
servants a freer hand than they might otherwise have had. But
if this was so, the major reason for it was the existence of the
American aid mission, and the ultimate dependence of most
economic advance upon grants from American authorities. That
is to say, a senior civil servant, when confronted by his minister,
could always point out that if his plans were not approved, then
there might be a reckoning with the Americans, whose ideas
about how the Greek government should try to shape the econ-
omy had much in common with the civil servant's approach,
and little with that of the politicians.

It could almost be said that the Americans, having failed to 647
alter the political pattern of Greece by direct intervention in 177
1950 and 1951, succeeded in short-circuiting the political proc- 433
ess by dealing directly with the rising group of civil servants 663
whose general outlook and whose personal positions in the hierarchy of administration had been profoundly influenced by the aid mission itself. This provided, temporarily at least, a workable substitute for responsible self-government; but it was an essentially fragile structure, depending both on the continuance of American grants to Greece and upon the acquiescence of the politicians.

Signs were not wanting in 1956 that the acquiescence of the 648
politicians could not always be depended upon. Neutralism as 668
between the Soviet Union and the United States had a few public advocates, and several newspapers systematically played up incidents that reflected discredit upon American personnel. There were also repeated newspaper attacks upon the privileged status American officials enjoyed. In the fall of 1955 popular demonstrations of sympathy for the Cypriotes in Athens, Salonika and Patras took a rather violent anti-American turn, including the stoning of American official buildings. Wherever I went in 1956 the inevitable question was put: Why does the United States not live up to its principles and support Greek claims in Cyprus?

In this indirect fashion, the Cyprus question allowed public expression of restiveness against American influence in Greece to assume a politically respectable, i.e., non-Communist, form. Part, though by no means a major part, of the emotional energy behind the Cyprus agitation in Greece reflected resentment against the American leading strings which had controlled Greece so thoroughly for nearly ten years.

Because the Cyprus question offered release for many diverse frustrations and grievances, it attained extraordinary proportions. All other political issues were in almost total eclipse in

648 668 the summer of 1956. The opposition belabored the government for failing to free the Cypriotes; the government swore that no effort had been spared; and each side rivaled the other in denouncing the stubbornness of Britain, the meddling of Turkey and the indifference of the United States. Events in Cyprus, where nearly every day people were killed as a result of the guerrilla operations of an organization known by the initials EOKA (Ethniki Organosis Kypriakou Agonos, or National Organization of Cypriote Fighters), occupied the most prominent place in every newspaper, and speeches or statements about the Cyprus question filled an amazing proportion of the space that remained. Nothing else seemed to matter very much; [521] and this attitude was not confined to newspapers. No conversation could long continue before the Cyprus question came up, and even very casual contacts between a Greek and an American were likely to produce an impassioned plea for Cyprus, together with reproaches against the United States government for failing to act in the matter.

From the point of view of someone interested in confronting and trying to relieve the economic and social difficulties of contemporary Greece, the Cyprus question was bound to appear totally irrelevant. If the Cypriotes were accorded the right to determine their own form of government, and if, as seemed overwhelmingly probable, the majority of the island's inhabitants then elected to unite with Greece, nothing would be helped so far as Greece's own problems were concerned. Yet by 1956 the liberation of Cyprus had become the very stuff and substance of Greek political debate. A more effective red herring would be difficult to imagine.

From the point of view of the Greek public, however, the Cypriote cause was sacred, and far more worthy of attention than merely economic questions. This attitude was deeply rooted in the political tradition of the nation. Indeed, the whole

career of modern Greece, since the days when a small segment 648
of the peninsula first won independence from the Turks, has 668
been punctuated by recurrent bouts of intense popular excitement over the liberation of one or another portion of the Greek-speaking world that still remained under foreign sovereignty. In spite of costly failures, this agitation, and actions in accord with it, sooner or later added the Ionian Islands, Thessaly, Crete, Macedonia, the easterly Aegean Islands and part of Thrace to the Greek state. So successful has the nationalist program been that by 1956 Cyprus remained the only important area where a large Greek-speaking majority lived under foreign rule. The Greeks, therefore, felt entirely justified in demanding that such an anomaly end.

Anyone who takes democratic doctrines seriously must agree that the Greek case in Cyprus was a good one, since about 80 per cent of the islanders speak Greek and have given strong evidences of identification with Greece in recent years. Nor has the social and economic level of the Cypriotes been such as to justify a denial of self-government. Hence the Greeks of Greece had a good cause, and felt that the indifference of the United States to the issue, and the refusal of Britain to agree to grant self-government to Cyprus, represented a repudiation of their democratic professions. The burning conviction that the great powers were in the wrong and that the Greeks were in the right added fuel to the agitation, while Turkey's intervention in the question had the effect of opening once again all the wounds inflicted by past warfare between the two peoples.

On two occasions in the past, war with the Turks resulted from the desire of Greeks to liberate their fellow nationals, and on several other occasions war was narrowly averted by the intervention of the great powers. These wars and war scares cost [433]
Greece dearly in the past. One of the reasons for the failure of the economy to develop more rapidly was the financial bur-

648 den the government incurred as a result of these enterprises;
668 and the complete catastrophe which came to the Hellenic com-
[433] munities of Asia Minor in 1922 and 1923, following the failure of the Greek effort to annex part of the eastern Aegean coast, left marks upon the Greek body social which are still conspicuous. Yet then, as more recently in the case of Cyprus, counsels of caution or calculations of expediency scarcely found a hearing. The warm feeling of patriotism, all the warmer for being so reckless of consequences, overcame and continued to overcome every obstacle.

The Cyprus question became acute in the spring of 1955 when EOKA began issuing manifestoes and throwing bombs in the island, demanding self-determination and the end of colonial administration. Whether, or in what degree, the Greek government was an accomplice in provoking EOKA to action is impossible to say. Clandestine support of irregular armed action against a foreign government is an old tradition in the Balkans. The Greek government was itself attacked in this indirect fashion by Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania during the guerrilla war; and all the Christian nations of the Balkans used similar methods against the Turks. The fact that the leader of EOKA was reputed to be Colonel George Grivas, a man who had once served in the Greek army, and who had been the head of an extra-legal rightist armed band in the years just after the end of World War II, suggested, but by no means proved, that agents of the Greek government may have had a hand in organizing the guerrillas in Cyprus.

If so (and this is not a proven fact), it seemed fairly clear that in the months that followed EOKA's appearance in Cyprus agitation in Greece grew to proportions that the government had not expected, and did not really desire. To have an issue upon which all Greeks could unite behind a government that

boldly demanded justice for the Cypriotes was one thing; to 648
have an issue that threatened to disrupt the NATO alliance in 668
the eastern Mediterranean and gave the opposition a chance to attack the government for its inability to bring the situation to a satisfactory conclusion was quite another. Yet it was this second, embarrassing position into which the Greek government soon fell. The British refused to give in; and during the summer of 1955 the Turks began to assert their own interest in the fate of Cyprus.

Greece and Turkey had both been admitted to NATO in the fall of 1951, and in 1954 Greece had also concluded an alliance with Yugoslavia. This laboriously constructed diplomatic and military bulwark, within which Greece might hope to shelter as securely as any nation could that stood on the frontier between the Communist and non-Communist worlds, now began to crumble; and by 1956, although the treaties remained nominally in existence, the ill feeling between Greeks and Turks had reached a pitch that made real cooperation impossible. Joint naval maneuvers had to be called off, and acute difficulties arose in the NATO headquarters at Smyrna, where Greek and Turkish officers had been working side by side.

As this situation developed, the Greek government became seriously embarrassed. On the one hand, it could not allow the opposition to flaunt the garb of patriotism without challenge. The publicity agencies of the government and the Athens radio thereupon indulged in a veritable orgy of rhetoric which could not fail to have an inflammatory effect in Cyprus and also at home in Greece. On the other hand, rumor had it that the royal palace and the Foreign Office urged caution and moderation – a spirit which, however carefully it was kept under cover, still gave the opposition a chance to denounce the halfheartedness and secret duplicity of the government.

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Through 1956 at least, the Greeks had spilled nothing more precious than words over Cyprus. The economic programs of the government had not been affected, nor had the social realities of Greece been touched. What had changed were Greek relations with Turkey and Britain; and in 1956 it was hard to see how the resultant damage to the NATO alliance could be repaired. A change in British policy might bring the Cypriotes self-determination and union with Greece – an upshot that would gratify the Greeks, but scarcely improve relations between Greece and Turkey. On the contrary, such an eventuality might well be accompanied by open violence between Turks and Greeks on Cyprus itself, where the Turkish minority constitutes about 20 per cent of the population; and similar and more dangerous disorders might spread into Turkish and Greek Thrace, where the two peoples remain mingled owing to the exclusion of this area from the exchange of populations that followed World War I.

The embitterment of Greek-Turkish relations seemed likely to endure for a long time, to the embarrassment of the Americans who wished to remain in alliance with both sides of the quarrel. It was, of course, because American diplomats dreaded such difficulties, and did not wish to antagonize the British, that the official policy of the United States remained so much aloof from the Cyprus question in 1955 and 1956.

Whatever the eventual outcome may be, it seems clear that the excitement over Cyprus had the effect not only of distracting attention from home policy, but also of weakening the Greek cabinet and restricting its freedom of maneuver. Feeling was directed most strongly against the Turks, secondly against the British, and more faintly but still definitely against the Americans. The emotional involvement with Cyprus was so strong that in the summer of 1956 it did not seem beyond the bounds of possibility that some turn of events in Cyprus might

bring about the overthrow of the Karamanlis government and 648
the installation of a cabinet far less inclined to cleave to the 668
western alliance system of NATO in foreign affairs, and far less amenable to American advice concerning home policy.

What the effect of such a change might be upon the develop- 433
ment of the economy, or upon the civil servants who were so 662
busily planning its growth, cannot be forecast. My point merely 663
is this: that the divorce between the realm of political discourse in Greece and the real problems of economic and social melioration within the nation is so wide as to be dangerous. Some economically ruinous action, rising from feelings of outraged nationalism, and provoked by politicians who hope to win place and prestige by risking everything on a politico-military gamble, may damage much of what has already been accomplished, or postpone indefinitely the realization of plans which have been laid for future economic expansion.

There are here the makings of a vicious circle. The major cause of the characteristic irresponsibility and extremism of Greek politics in recent decades, I am convinced, has been the chronic discontents and personal frustrations which tens of thousands of white-collar and professional people have felt. For them, politics offers a psychological release from daily difficulty and disappointment. To act as an adequate catharsis, political argument must be exciting, indeed inflammatory. The politicians therefore offer excitement, and when they cannot find it they try to manufacture it. If no internal foe seems sufficiently evil, then attacks are turned against some foreign antagonist. Political instability and changeability are the result, and when words boil over into actions real economic setbacks often follow – setbacks that feed the chronic discontent behind the political manifestations themselves.

Much of the domestic history of modern Greece can be interpreted as the result of such a vicious circle in action. The re-

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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433 construction of the economy and the transformation of the civil
662 service since 1947 seem to offer a chance for escape from this
663 circle, but escape is as yet by no means assured.

## The Communist Problem

668 The Communist party was declared illegal in October 1947,
669 and has remained illegal since then. Communist party leaders first joined the guerrillas, then retreated with the remnant of the guerrilla army behind the iron curtain. It seems entirely likely that the exile leadership was torn by faction and recrimination. Backwash from the shipwreck of their hopes on the Macedonian issue in 1949 must have continued to distract the secret councils of the party. Equally, the changing winds of doctrine that followed Stalin's death shook the Greek Communist party, and, combined perhaps with other factors, led in the fall of 1956 to the demotion of Nicholas Zachariades and the substitution of an almost unknown personality as Secretary General.

Rather strenuous police measures were taken during the guerrilla war to break up the Communist underground organization. Many people were arrested and several hundred were shot. How effective these measures were in breaking down the party organization cannot be judged by anyone standing outside the inmost party circles. Furthermore, the failure of the guerrilla enterprise, and the collision between Greek national feeling and international Communist policy over the question of the future of Macedonia must have disheartened even the most fanatical Communists in Greece, and certainly discredited Communism in the eyes of many who had formerly been sympathetic.

668 Whether these events mean that the Communist threat to Greece is lastingly removed, or whether the Greek Communist

party will be able to rise once more from its defeat and become again a disciplined, dominating force in internal Greek politics, will depend at least as much upon the course of international affairs as upon any efforts the Greek Communists may make by themselves. 668

Nevertheless, in 1956 signs were not wanting to show that Communism was still a force to be reckoned with in Greece. In spite of all the police had been able to do, it seemed certain that an illegal underground organization continued to exist, aimed more, perhaps, at collecting intelligence for foreign Communist states than at fomenting revolution in Greece. Greek-language broadcasts from behind the iron curtain continued to reach the country, informing the faithful of the proper attitudes to take on current political questions. The fact has already been mentioned that one Athens newspaper faithfully followed the line laid down by Communist broadcasts; a second appeared most sympathetic, though its editors did not always conform completely to Soviet directives. [204]

On the political stage, a new party was formed in advance of the elections of September 1951 which seemed very like EAM, the Communist-dominated resistance front which had so nearly won control of Greece in 1944. This new party was known by the initials EDA (Enosis Dimikratikon Aristera, or Union of the Democratic Left). Its candidates in 1951 were drawn in considerable measure from among persons who had made a name for themselves during the wartime resistance – many of them being in jail as Communists when the elections were held. 666 668

In spite of these circumstances, EDA met with very considerable success. In 1951 it won 180,640 votes, and in the elections of 1952, 152,011. In both cases, the EDA total was close to 10 per cent of all valid ballots, amounting to 10.6 per cent in 1951 and 9.6 per cent in 1952. Inasmuch as EDA participated in an electoral coalition with other opposition parties in the election

666 of 1956, it is impossible to tell how many votes it may have con-
668 tributed to the opposition's total on that occasion.

In 1951 and 1952, the defeat of the guerrilla army was still fresh and the demoralization of the Greek Communist party must have been serious. It therefore seems safe to assume that the proportion of about 10 per cent which EDA won in these elections represented about the minimal support the Greek Communist party commanded in the country. It is interesting to note, in passing, that a public opinion survey conducted by American and British experts in 1946 found 9.3 per cent of the population willing to declare to the faces of western interrogators an intention of following Communist instructions to abstain from the elections of that year. Very nearly the same proportion, and probably many of the same persons, supported EDA in 1951 and 1952. They must be regarded as "hard core" Communists or sympathizers so strongly attached to the party that nothing is likely to alienate them from Communist leadership.

Given the hardships under which many Greek families live and the history of the past fifteen years, during which on two separate occasions a Communist-led movement seemed on the verge of winning power, this proportion may appear satisfactorily, and even surprisingly, small. Many thousands of young people, after all, dedicated several years of their lives and underwent very real risks and discomforts in the service of a cause offered them by Communist propaganda. Such experiences and loyalties are not easily wiped out, especially when a person who has once been identified as a member of any sort of Communist organization is likely to suffer discrimination in job-hunting and in all contacts with the government forever after.

At the same time, a hard core of about 10 per cent of the voters constitutes a great political asset. It opens the door for

deals with other parties and coalitions that may badly need just 666
such support to win office. In 1956, the opposition coalition, under 668
the leadership of George Papandreou, yielded to this temptation and accepted the proffered support of EDA. Papandreou was careful to announce, however, that in the event of victory he would not assign any seats in his cabinet to members of EDA; and after the election cooperation between EDA and Papandreou was promptly broken off.

Year in and year out, in the kaleidoscopic shifting of personal reputation that constitutes the warp and woof of Greek politics, it seems very doubtful whether any of the leaders of personal parties can regularly count on as much as 10 per cent of the vote. The apparently solid character of the Communist hard core thus takes on still greater significance. And in times when the discredit of the Communist party is not so recent as it was in 1951 and 1952, it seems at least possible that a fringe of fellow travelers and vague sympathizers — people who wish to protest vigorously against the status quo, and feel, quite correctly, that the Communists represent the most effective challenge to the prevailing social order — may add their votes to those of the hard core, and swell the proportion of the electorate responsive to Communist leadership quite considerably, perhaps to something like 20 per cent of the total.

This means, I believe, that the Communist problem has not 668
been really solved. There still exists an important minority in the country which is prepared to go outside the framework of legality whenever opportunity offers a favorable prospect of success; a minority which on other occasions is ready to participate in the parliamentary process, to join electoral coalitions and to carry on newspaper campaigns against the government, but does all this fundamentally in bad faith, hoping to gain a toehold in the government only to convert it into a stranglehold,

668 and then destroy the parliamentary machinery and civil liberty in favor of Communist dictatorship.

668 648 In 1956 these things were not apparent. Communism was not an issue; Cyprus had replaced it, and the Communist party had officially endorsed the Cyprus struggle over the radio. No one admitted to being a Communist, since to do so would have been a short way to jail. The people seemed quite genuinely glad to be relieved of the long preoccupation with the Communist question, and to find a cause upon which everyone could unite. This was, indeed, one of the reasons why Cyprus was such a heart-warming cause for the Greeks. Everyone, no matter what his opinions on domestic issues, was behind the Cypriotes. The Greeks had not known what it was to be united on an important public issue since the time of the Albanian war in 1940. Yet if Communists and nationalists were to quarrel in Cyprus, a possibility of which there were already some convincing signs in the summer of 1956, then the Communist question would emerge again in Greece with new bitterness, as each side sought to blame the other for the disruption of the Cypriote struggle.

66 In any analysis such as this it is easy to overemphasize the instability and insecurity of Greek political affairs. Certainly Greek politics are unstable, and the parliamentary regime in Greece is insecure. But it is well to remember that these conditions are not new. Exactly the same could be said of the political scene at any time since 1909, when the current phase of modern Greek political life began. The Greeks have learned to [829] live with such conditions, and even manage to derive lively exhilaration from the perpetual uncertainty of their politics. With- [521] out politics, what would there be to talk about in the cafés?

647 829 The things that are new in Greek public life attract little public attention. The man in the street and in the village coffee

house still takes pleasure in denouncing the inefficiency and stupidity of officialdom, and understands little if anything of the calculations and plans of the small group of civil servants who are busily trying to build a new future for the country. Their success is certainly not assured, but the fact that such men exist in the government opens the best prospect Greece has seen in more than a generation for the eventual attainment of social stability and secure economic progress. In the last chapter some observations will be made upon the probability of such an outcome. 647 829

[PP 204-240 not processed]

[ For a discussion of culture change in six rural villages see category 116, pp. 85-115 and 120-146. ]